

LIGHTNING THROUGH THE CLOUDS

‘IZZ AL-DIN AL-QASSAM
AND THE MAKING
OF THE MODERN
MIDDLE EAST



MARK SANAGAN

Lightning through the Clouds

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*‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and the
Making of the Modern Middle East*

Mark Sanagan

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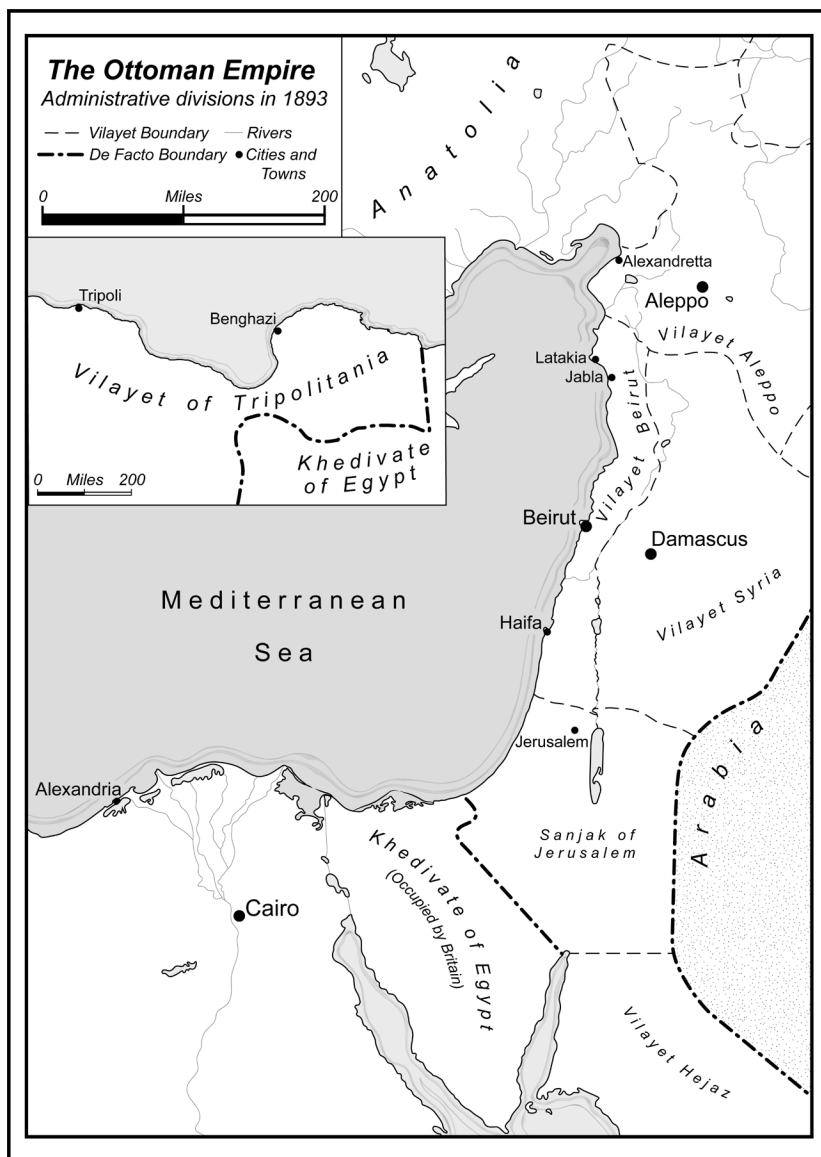
ABBREVIATIONS

BN A	British National Archives
CADN	Centre des archives diplomatiques, Nantes
CO	Colonial Office
CZA	Central Zionist Archive
FO	Foreign Office
HA	Haganah Archive
HAC	Higher Arab Committee (sometimes rendered as Arab High Committee — al-Lajna al-‘Arabiyya al-‘Ulya)
HMA	Haifa Municipal Archive
IOR	India Office Records
ISA	Israeli State Archive
LON	League of Nations Archive
MEC	Middle East Center Archive
PAWS	Palestine Arab Workers Society (Jam‘iyyat al-‘Ummal al-‘Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya)
SHD	Service historique de la Défense
SMC	Supreme Muslim Council (al-Majlis al-Islami al-A‘la)
YMMA	Young Men’s Muslim Association (Jam‘iyyat al-Shubban al-Muslimin)
WO	War Office

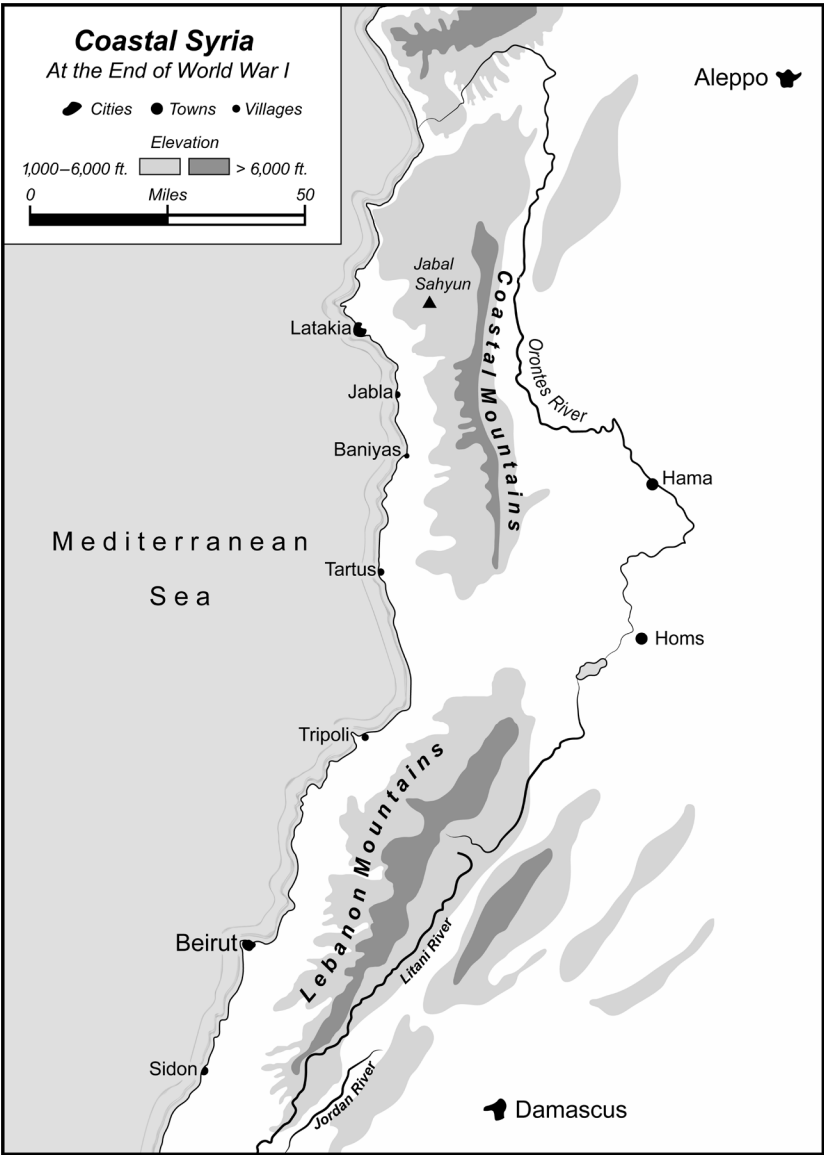
A NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS

I have attempted to maintain a balance between readability and fidelity to Arabic, Hebrew, and Ottoman spelling. With that in mind, I have generally followed the transliteration guidelines set out in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. This will sometimes make for less than perfect reading, as in a sentence such as “imam and *khaṭīb*,” but I have included a glossary at the end of the book for reference, should a term appear that is unfamiliar to the reader.

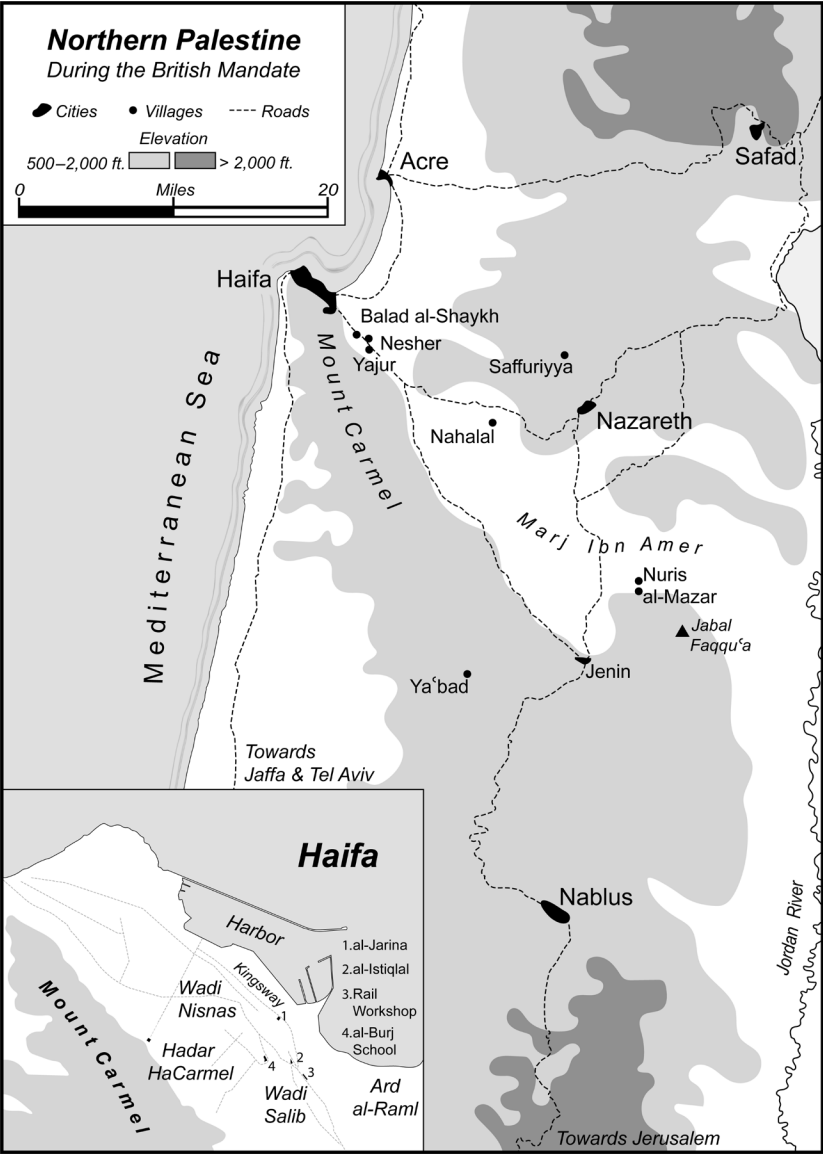
In some circumstances, such as “al-Qassamiyyun,” I have adopted an Anglicized rendition (Qassamites) for purely stylistic reasons. This is also true of a few names with “accepted English spellings” that differ from the IJMES system, such as Yasser Arafat and Gamal Abd al-Nasser.



Map 1. The Ottoman Empire: Administrative Divisions in 1893.



Map 2. Coastal Syria at the End of World War I.



Map 3. Northern Palestine during the British Mandate.

PROLOGUE

The end began with the theft of some grapefruit. On the morning of November 7, 1935, twenty-eight-year-old Sergeant Moshe Rosenfeld—the “best Jewish horseman in all of Palestine”¹—was called to investigate. He left his police station in Shatta, an outpost in the southern perimeter of the Galilee, accompanied by two Arab constables whose names have been lost to history. North of the village, at the foot of Jabal Faqu‘a (Mount Gilboa), Rosenfeld dismounted, moved into the citrus grove, and sent his companions back down the wadi with the horses.

The forested southern slope of Jabal Faqu‘a is a verdant landscape of Aleppo pines and, that fall, anemones yet to bloom. While not steep, the rise up from the valley required exertion, and the winding path that Rosenfeld took would have been soft, if not muddy. It was a slow walk toward the higher ground. Above him, among the caves and large outcrops of limestone, two men crouched, guarding an encampment of rebels under the command of a Muslim cleric named ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam.

They watched as Rosenfeld slowly approached, until one of the guards, Mahmud Salim al-Makhzumi, fired his rifle, hitting the officer once in the head and once in the side. Hearing the shots, the two Arab constables retreated quickly to their police station to report the contact.²

Rosenfeld’s body was found at eleven o’clock that morning, and shortly thereafter, the Palestine Police discovered the caves in which the rebel unit had been living. There they found discarded raincoats, English and German ammunition, blankets, food stores that would have lasted days, and a man’s Scouting uniform. The rebels were long gone. What followed was one of the largest manhunts in British colonial history.³

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Introduction

Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his band of men on the mountainside had been in those forests for only a few days when Sergeant Rosenfeld was shot dead. It was on November 2, 1935, that al-Qassam, a prominent preacher, teacher, and community organizer in the northern Palestinian city of Haifa, made his last public appearance, at a ceremony denouncing the Balfour Declaration on the eighteenth anniversary of its publication. Sometime shortly after he shared the stage with Jamal al-Husayni, the head of the Palestine Arab Party, he left his wife and four children and joined his men.

After Rosenfeld was killed, the British Mandate government in Palestine labeled al-Qassam a “bandit.” For the Jewish community, known as the *Yishuv*, the bearded shaykh was a dangerous and worrisome “terrorist,” finally exposed as the mastermind of numerous murders over the previous few years. And, to most of Palestine’s Arabs, he was—and remains—an avatar for the struggle for self-determination.¹

In fact, claims on al-Qassam have shifted with the vicissitudes of Palestinian political vogues since his death. According to ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid, a prominent nationalist politician and editor during the British Mandate, al-Qassam was buried draped in the flag of the newly independent Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq, placed there by the head of the Arab Bank in Haifa and longtime friend of al-Qassam’s, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim. The flags of Saudi Arabia and Yemen were laid on the corpses of al-Qassam’s comrades; it is not clear if the flags were chosen for the purpose of assimilating al-Qassam and his compatriots into the historical trajectory of a *Palestinian* nationalism or a pan-Arab one. But there was little in common between the sociopolitical makeup of the Mashriq (the Arab eastern Mediterranean) and the tribal isolationists in the Arabian Peninsula. Nor is it likely that al-Qassam idealized the

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chaos found in the British-backed “independence” of Hashemite Iraq. That al-Hajj Ibrahim saw the independence of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Iraq as an interim step toward a unified and independent pan-Arab kingdom like the one envisioned by Sharif Husayn, the leader of the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans during the First World War, is equally unlikely. Instead, al-Hajj Ibrahim, an important figure with both Palestinian and pan-Arab nationalist leanings, was, fundamentally, making a statement against colonial rule. Even before his coffin was in the ground, the first public claim on al-Qassam had been made.²

More recently, al-Qassam has become the historical centerpiece for Palestinian movements whose outlook is self-consciously “Islamic.” Hamas, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, in Palestine is particularly representative of this: its military wing is named the ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, their projectile of choice has been the Qassam rocket (*ṣārūkh al-Qassām*), and article 7 of their 1988 Covenant explicitly claims al-Qassam as the first iteration of the “struggle [jihad] in confronting the Zionist invasion” that begins a teleological line leading directly to Hamas.³

Yet al-Qassam was not a native Palestinian. He was born in 1883 in Jabla, an Ottoman provincial backwater on the Mediterranean coast one hundred twenty miles southwest of Aleppo in what is now Syria. Al-Qassam was born into a prominent local Sufi order—a Qadiri *ṭarīqa*—and received his religious training as a cleric (*‘ālim*) at the venerable al-Azhar in Cairo at the height of the late nineteenth-century Islamic modernist reform movement. He returned to Syria and later organized anti-colonial resistance to the Italian invasion of Tripolitania (Libya) in 1912. He served in the Ottoman Army as a chaplain stationed in Damascus during the First World War, and, after the Allies’ victory in Damascus in 1918, he led a small insurgency against French rule in Syria. In 1920 he was sentenced to death, before escaping to Haifa in what was by then British Palestine.

In Haifa, al-Qassam toiled away teaching at a boys’ school and working with illiterate laborers. He preached at a downtown mosque and attracted a following from among the young men who found employment on the docks and lived in the tin shacks that spread out south and east of the city. He registered marriages in the district’s villages, helped organize a labor union, and founded a social and political society for young men. Finally, in the 1930s, he organized groups of men in northern Palestine into small cells with the goal of overthrowing the British colonial administration and ousting the Zionist settlers who had arrived in Palestine in increasing numbers over the previous decade and a half. That plan failed when Salim al-Makhzumi shot Moshe Rosenfeld.

■ On July 12, 1936, the Jaffa-based newspaper *Filastin* published a cartoon on its front page featuring the mufti of Jerusalem, al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, commonly regarded as the leader of the Palestinians, and his archrival in nationalist politics, Raghib al-Nashashibi of the National Defense Party. The two longtime foes are depicted shaking hands and agreeing to cooperate and “fight to the end” in the revolt that had recently begun to feature a growing insurgency. Overlooking the handshake is Chaim Weizmann, head of the World Zionist Organization. Weizmann is seen muttering his incredulous surprise at the improbable alliance between al-Husayni and al-Nashashibi.⁴

But floating overhead—in the form of a radiating angel—is a fourth figure: that of ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam. Al-Qassam is rendered quite faithfully from one of the few portraits taken of him, and yet the cartoonist has added a certain benevolent smile absent in the original. In analyzing a series of political cartoons from the period, historian Sandy Sufian describes al-Qassam’s appearance as follows: “Both Qassam and Nashashibi have aquiline noses, full cheeks and long foreheads, indicating honesty and high development. Qassam’s fingers are long and his palms face down, symbolizing his intelligence and protective care.”⁵

Honest and of high development; intelligence and protective care: this reading of a representation of al-Qassam is instructive in providing us with some interpretation of his early public image, one that reflects his character, not necessarily his deeds. The memory of his character has, through generations of Palestinian nationalists of all political stripes, remained largely static. The memory of his deeds, on the other hand, has been subjected to the inexactitudes of a collective memory unsupported by the ideological state institutions normally found in modern nation-states. Palestinians in Israel or living under occupation, or those dispersed in a global diaspora of wealth or refugee camps, have imagined many al-Qassams.

Al-Qassam has become a symbol of sacrifice and anti-colonial resistance despite this relatively limited knowledge of his actual story. As Ted Swedenburg points out in his 1987 article on early biographies of al-Qassam, there has been no hegemonic “national” interpretation of al-Qassam imprinted on the minds of Palestinians. For many, al-Qassam is thus a sort of nationalist tabula rasa. Without much knowledge of who he was, authors of various strains of Palestinian nationalism have inscribed all sorts of meanings.⁶

■ There are, broadly speaking, three categories of al-Qassam biographies: a few English-language works that include three notable articles, as well as a number of sections of monographs on broader topics; at least a dozen biographies and hagiographies in Arabic, the most significant of which were pub-

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lished in the mid-1980s; and the more amorphous group of al-Qassam narratives that continue to circulate via the internet and the press in Arab popular discourse.

As a principal character in the early Palestinian nationalist movement, al-Qassam appears rather superficially in contemporary English-language histories of the British Mandate and the 1936–1939 Palestinian Revolt. Many of these works give only a brief account of his life, with particular emphasis on his death, and they point out that his martyrdom was a key moment in the prologue to open conflict between Palestinians and the mandatory government in 1936.⁷

Beyond these general histories of the period, there are three short biographies of al-Qassam in English: Abdullah Schleifer's "The Life and Thought of 'Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam" (1979), Shai Lachman's "Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929–1939: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement" (1982), and Basheer Nafi's "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and Rebel Leader" (1997). Taken together as dedicated studies of a man described as "the father of (Palestinian) nationalism," this set of work is surprisingly short.⁸

Schleifer's and Nafi's biographies are both deeply researched and significant for the way in which they address a central conflict in thinking about al-Qassam's life. Schleifer concentrates on al-Qassam's Sufism and his corresponding commitment to an Islamic ethic of social justice. For Schleifer, al-Qassam's birth into an environment heavily influenced by Islamic mysticism is evidence of a connection between his upbringing and his pre-rebellion social work in Palestine. He presents an activist uniquely preoccupied with the material improvement of his community.

By contrast, Nafi argues that it was the *moral* improvement of his community that truly animated al-Qassam — specifically, the ideas of the modernist Islamic reform movement centered in Cairo and Damascus known as Salafism (*al-salafiyya*). However, Nafi pays more attention to the political realities al-Qassam faced at the time and the difficulty in thinking about al-Qassam in terms of competing notions of jihad and Palestinian notable politics. He also suggests that al-Qassam's armed struggle in Palestine was inevitable, and he links it to insurgencies in both Morocco and Syria that were defined by anti-imperial Islamic discourse. For Nafi, anti-colonial rebellion was al-Qassam's primary occupation and the focus of his entire adult life. While these two biographies attempt to describe what motivated al-Qassam, in the process he is often rendered as one-dimensional: everything he does is in service to his religious principles.

For a more comprehensive biography, we must turn to Arabic sources. The most significant boom in Arabic al-Qassam biographies came nearly fifty years after his death. After forty years of displacement since the Nakba and twenty years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and following the expulsion of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from Lebanon in 1982, Palestinians were particularly eager to foreground national heroes such as al-Qassam. Samih Hammuda, ‘Abd al-Sattar Qasim, and Bayan Nuwayhid Al-Hut all published notable biographies of al-Qassam at the time. Hammuda’s and Qasim’s works were published in the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories while Al-Hut, the historian and wife of PLO leader Shafiq Al-Hut, published hers in Beirut.⁹

Swedenburg surveyed some of the ways Palestinians under Israeli occupation came to narrate, in publications and through interviews, al-Qassam’s role in the early nationalist movement. He argued that they ascribed certain political ideologies—conscious or unconscious—to al-Qassam and identified these characterizations as “al-Qassam as a Palestinian Nationalist”; “as Che Guevara”; “as a proto-socialist”; “as a pan-Arab Nationalist”; and “al-Qassam as a Muslim *Mujahid*.” Samih Hammuda’s approach, we learn, is scholarly, but focuses on al-Qassam’s reputed Islamism: that he was engaged in jihad against “The West” and its ongoing “Crusades” (*Salibiyya*) against Muslims. He bemoans the absence of religious men such as al-Qassam from the national leadership where “Westernized secularists” have become entrenched. ‘Abd al-Sattar Qasim’s biography, in contrast, focuses on al-Qassam’s nationalist credentials. He does this largely by undermining the idea that al-Qassam was even a Salafi. Instead he suggests that al-Qassam had a different religious outlook than the Palestinian religious leaders of the 1980s, who at that point were beginning to challenge the established dominance of Fatah. Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hut’s study of al-Qassam relies, like Hammuda’s and Qasim’s, on a mix of primary sources and oral interviews. Al-Hut is particularly interested in al-Qassam’s relationship (and lack of one) with other members of the Palestinian elite and how his death affected the factionalism of the Palestinian leadership. This factionalism remains a theme not just of the mandate years, but up to the present as well.¹⁰

Finally, another boom of al-Qassam biographies in Arabic has only recently occurred. This wave corresponds to a wider general interest in the history of jihad and in early forms of anti-colonial resistance in the Middle East. These biographies end up being read through the prism of the last decade and a half and our understanding of “terrorism.”

While they may be part scholarly histories, these al-Qassam biographies

can take the form of hagiography in their appeal to specific political ideologies largely because the battle for ideological dominance in Palestinian anti-colonial nationalism remains particularly contested.¹¹

Beyond these scholarly and quasi-scholarly accounts of al-Qassam's life, there is a robust market for al-Qassam stories in the Arab public sphere. One recent example of this is an article that appeared in 2010 on *al-Jazeera's* website written by Muhsin Salih and titled "al-Qassam wa-l-Tajriba al-Qassamiyya" (al-Qassam and the Qassamite Experience). In it Salih describes al-Qassam's character, deeds, and legacy with assertive detail: "He had a strong faith, a comprehensive understanding of Islam, intelligence and the ability to organize, courage and a grasp of facts, a sociable and popular personality beyond his jihadi and advocacy work. . . . He was modest in the way he ate, dressed and lived."¹²

Salih goes on to describe a man whose entire way of life was dedicated to the practice and spread of jihad. He was an ascetic who would sell his only possessions in pursuit of his religious and political goals, and who encouraged his followers to do the same. Salih proceeds to connect quite literally a Qassamite doctrine through his followers who fought in the 1936–1939 Revolt, through the insurgent group Jaish al-Jihad al-Muqaddas in the 1948 war, all the way to the "Islamic trend, alive and active today": the same historical trajectory that is marked out by Hamas in their Covenant.

■ Unlike the works described above, this book is a social biography, a genre that discusses individuals using methods typical of social history in order to shine a light on wider social, economic, and political currents. A conventional history of this period (roughly 1880 to 1939) would deal largely with the politics of state and empire to the exclusion of personal stories that show that people who populated this universe were diverse, complex, and at times contradictory. This approach, almost by necessity, elides the uniqueness and diversity of the human experience. A social biography then is a dialectic—a way of telling the life history of a single individual that makes manifest all the ways he or she was shaped by an environment; it is also a way of explaining that environment through the lens of an individual. In this case, since al-Qassam's personal history has been subjugated to the vagaries of nationalist myth-making, a social biography shows how he was the product of, and agent in, his broader society.

Edmund Burke III, in a volume that features Abdallah Schleifer's biography of al-Qassam, was instrumental in bringing the analysis of life histories to the front of historical studies of the Middle East. Later, Mark LeVine and Gershon Shaffir offered a similar approach for Palestinian and Israeli



Figure 1. Portrait of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam by Khaled Raad, date unknown; courtesy of the Institute for Palestine Studies.

lives, writing in the introduction to their edited volume: “Studying whole persons and their history opens an important realm for us: the emotional tone of their accumulated experiences, among them overriding convictions and sentiments derived from feelings of humiliation and pride, revenge and justice, and a readiness to behave in ways and make sacrifices that, in other contexts, would be hard to account for.” The goal then, is to reintroduce a

humanity into a time and place that is dealt with too often in tropes and essentialisms.¹³

With that in mind, al-Qassam's life is particularly suited for the social-biography approach. In straddling the late Ottoman and nascent nation-state periods, his life undermines traditional narratives about the Middle East in the formative years of the so-called "modern" period (typically the period from the Tanzimat reforms of the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century to the present). Discrete political identities such as Ottoman or Arab nationalist, Palestinian or Syrian nationalist, or pan-Islamist never clearly apply to al-Qassam, yet his story remains a powerful element in the discourse of contemporary politics in the region. His example clearly shows that identity—the roots of which preoccupy much of the contemporary scholarship on the period—was fluid as well as "contingent and relational." This book uses the al-Qassam story to flesh out the complex connections between place, religion, and power that were under intense negotiation between the turn of the twentieth century and the Second World War.¹⁴

This latter period, following the postwar arrangements reached by the Allies at San Remo in 1920, was formative in many ways, not least in that it saw the advent of newly demarcated geographic boundaries. These boundaries—the close antecedents of the contemporary Middle East—were geo-strategic colonial imperatives that saw the combining and dividing of religious and ethnic communities in Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria, and disparate urban, rural, and tribal elements in Transjordan. It is little wonder, then, that such constructs would be the object of renegotiation, rejection, and struggle in the war's aftermath and the dissolution of empire. Political, ethnic, and cultural identities were being recast as the "state" was re-created in different forms. Nationalism was supposed to animate the political discourse within these states the same way it had in Europe. That the process wasn't as simple should not be a surprise.¹⁵

The social biography is also a particularly useful method for the study of anti-colonial rebels, when little documentation exists apart from nationalist narratives and colonial archives. In this respect, al-Qassam is both a typical and atypical choice of subject for a social biography. He remains a widely known and respected figure in much of the Middle East, yet knowledge concerning the details of his life remains limited. There are dozens of discussions of him, typically accompanied by brief biographies, in histories of the Middle East, colonialism in the region, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestinians, and Islamists—from textbooks to monographs, in any number of languages. However, these are almost all uniform, fixing al-Qassam around the set of largely undisputed facts set out in the narrative above. Then he

becomes an example of a radical who used the discourse of jihad to incite violence against the British and the Jews of Palestine. With each of these uses of al-Qassam, every time he is deployed as a counterweight example to the quietism or factionalism of the “traditional Palestinian leadership,” or as an example of “fanatical terrorism” inflicted upon the Yishuv, al-Qassam’s life is pushed further from *what it actually was*. Moving beyond the typical al-Qassam narratives, toward a more comprehensive picture of just what his life was like, provides insight into all sorts of important phenomena that continue to resonate. While al-Qassam’s story is unique, his life speaks broadly to the history of the region and its people.

The Guide

In the nineteenth century, there were two routes into the town of Jabla. A road from the south wound through the 'Alawite town of Baniyas to the southern gate of Jabla's walls, built by Byzantine engineers at the end of the first millennium. From the northern port city and regional administrative center of Latakia, the road stuck closely to the rocky coast until it, too, intersected with Jabla's medieval walls. Samuel Lyde, a missionary for the Church of England in the mid-nineteenth century, would have come through the northern gate and exited to the south on his way to the Crusader castle at Marqab. Lyde was an irritable and malcontent traveler who started a fatal riot in Palestine after he shot a deaf beggar in 1856. In Syria, he was gathering research for what became the first published Western account of the customs of the 'Alawites, and his description of the countryside between Latakia and Jabla is one of desolation and abandonment. He and his companions passed by numerous rivers, once spanned by bridges, the foundations of which had "given way." He writes, "Nothing remains of them but the massive piers which still hold together although reversed." Lyde was contemptuous of the people and their neglect: "No attempts are made to rebuild them." The land had been abandoned: "Mounds and ruins show that this fertile plain was once thickly inhabited, but now neither house nor village appears in the six hours ride to Gebliee."¹

In fact, the route Lyde took along the eastern Mediterranean was populated by dozens of villages and thousands of inhabitants. Between those mounds and ruins, Ottoman peasants toiled on cotton, wheat, and tobacco farms, harvesting commodities bound either for ships in Latakia and export to France or Lyde's home of England, or for the interior commercial hub of Aleppo. Lyde was not alone in missing life in the town. Ellen Clare Miller,

in her 1871 travelogue *Eastern Sketches*, described the town as a “small white endive” but went on to say that it was “ugly,” with “little worth noting.” Or go back further: In 1740 Richard Pococke called Jabla “a poor miserable town.” In 1697, Henry Maundrell described it as striking “a very mean figure.” Perhaps most biting of all was the Ottoman civil servant Ibn al-Jay‘an, who, while accompanying the Sultan on a voyage along the Syrian coast in 1477, remarked that Jabla was “a small town, and its people are like beasts.”²

Jabla, and the sanjak of Latakia—the larger administrative unit to which the town belonged—was, in fact, a dynamic social environment with peasants, notables, and elites of different religions, sects, and tribal associations. In the “ruined but interesting town” of Jabla, a vibrant social and cultural life persisted.³

Upon entering the town’s center from either direction, one would have been struck by the sight of the five white domes belonging to the Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Adham Mosque. One of the town’s few landmarks, the mosque dates to the twelfth century, when it was constructed by Saladin as his armies maneuvered south from Anatolia and battled Crusaders in their nearby castles.

Its white domes and minaret sat just east of Jabla’s old city and served as the religious and social center of village life. While Lyde rested under a large sycamore tree near the mosque, adherents of the Sufi order gathered to study the teachings of their shaykhs, peasants brought goods to market, and children played in the nearby fields. Mustafa al-Qassam taught in one of the Sufi lodges (*zāwiya*, pl. *zawaya*—the local home of a sufi order, a *ṭarīqa*), while his son ‘Abd al-Qadir studied in one of those nearby schools (sing. *kuttāb*, pl. *kutātīb*), learning to recite the Qur’an from memory. These institutions—the *zāwiya*, the *kuttāb*, and the Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Adham Mosque—would become the locus around which the life of ‘Abd al-Qadir’s son, Muhammad ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, would revolve in Jabla, from the time he was born in 1883 until he left the town one final time to join in the fight against the French occupation of Syria in 1919.

■ From the sycamore tree under which Samuel Lyde took his rest, one could immediately pass to the south and through the mosque’s gates. Ibrahim Ibn Adham was an ascetic who, as legend has it, arrived in Jabla from Balkh in northern Afghanistan after wandering through the holy cities of the Levant. Ibn Adham “caught the imagination of subsequent generations of Sufis especially because of his generosity, . . . kind acts to friends, and his feats of self-denial.” Regardless of whether Ibn Adham had in fact ever been to Jabla, let alone was buried there, a shrine (*mazar*) to the early Sufi was constructed



Figure 2. Syrian stamp depicting the Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Adham Mosque; author reproduction.

in the center of town. The shrine, and the mosque that was built around it, soon became the town's primary economic driver. During the Mamluk and Abbasid periods, the shaykh's legend grew throughout the Islamic world. The town's shrine to him became a significant pilgrimage destination during *sh'abān*, the eighth month of the Islamic calendar. Yet by the time al-Qassam was born, the site had fallen into some disrepair. The Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II began restoring the complex in the 1880s, as he did for a number of cities across the Arab provinces during his thirty-year reign. The restoration work would no doubt have taken place in part under the guidance and supervision of one of al-Qassam's family members, many of whom had prominent positions of leadership in the mosque's administration.⁴

The main mosque building, topped by five white domes, housed the flag-draped sarcophagus of Ibn Adham. Along the southern wall was the *mihrāb* (indicating the direction of prayer) next to a small wooden pulpit known as a *minbar*. The courtyard of arched perimeter walkways connected to the adjacent bath, itself topped by an additional white dome. The six-story minaret stood atop the western wall of the complex. To the south of the mosque, beyond the building housing the bath, was the amphitheater built following the Roman conquest in 64 BCE. Both the amphitheater and the mosque lay to the west of Jabla's old city, which occupied the ground between the Roman amphitheater and the harbor, three hundred yards to the west. The small market itself was a diverse environment with stalls selling meat, fish, and

spices next to shops with blacksmiths and cobblers. The produce sold came largely from the hinterland surrounding Jabla, where greens and small citrus grew abundantly.⁵

The harbor in the center of Jabla was largely undeveloped at the end of the nineteenth century. Despite being a port town, Jabla's relationship to the sea had traditionally been an ambivalent one. While mullet and sardines were caught in open feluccas (*falūka*) for local consumption, Jabla was a tertiary port during the Ottoman period, and commercial shipping through the port was limited. Most sea-bound commerce took place eighteen miles to the north in Latakia or the principal maritime gateways in the eastern Mediterranean of Beirut, Alexandretta, and Istanbul. Instead, Jabla's primary economic activity took place between the town's merchants and the agrarian peasants in the surrounding communities.⁶

Jabla lies on the narrow littoral plain between the eastern Mediterranean and a series of promontories forming the Coastal Mountain Range (*Silsilat al-Jibal as-Sahiliyya*). Standing at the gate of the Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Adham Mosque, one could easily see the mountains rise up from the plain to the east, nine miles away. Prone to erosion and rocky soil, the mountains have few rivers or water resources, which made farming difficult and kept many of these villages in a state of perpetual poverty throughout the nineteenth century. This environment was, however, beneficial for imperiled minorities, providing shelter to various groups large and small, including the Assassins in the Middle Ages and the 'Alawites, an esoteric, Gnostic offshoot of Shi'ism. The 'Alawites were persecuted by the Mamluks then by the Ottomans, first under their ninth Sultan, Selim I, who killed hundreds of thousands across the Empire in the sixteenth century. These persecutions eventually gave way to lesser hostility in the form of special taxation and discrimination, and even indifference and tolerance. But the 'Alawites survived countless assaults in part because of the protection these mountains afforded—protection 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam would exploit when he and a small band of rebels set up a base for their insurgency against the French during the Syrian revolt in 1919.⁷

Eighteen miles to the north of Jabla is the city of Latakia (*al-Ladhiqiyya*). In 1888 Ottoman officials reorganized the administrative divisions of Bilad al-Sham—the Arab region that now comprises Palestine/Israel, Lebanon, and parts of Jordan, Syria, and Turkey. In doing so, the Ottomans made Latakia an administrative unit within the vilayet (province) of Beirut, an acknowledgment of the latter city's relatively recent ascendancy. Latakia became a sanjak (a subprovince; Arabic: *sanjāq*) and Jabla a kaza (or district, *qaḍā*). Within Jabla's district, there were four smaller towns and as many

as two hundred fifty villages on the plain and into the western slope of the mountains. Unlike those in the mountains, the villages of the plain exploited the rich soil and were connected to Jabla through trade, custom, and social life. The lemons, oranges, bananas, pomegranates, and legumes that were grown on small plots were transported to Jabla for sale in the market, while major crops such as wheat, cotton, and tobacco were brought to Jabla before being moved overland to Latakia, then on to Aleppo, or loaded onto ships destined for Europe. This north-south trade route along the coast ran parallel to an inland route east of the Coastal Mountain Range that ran from Damascus in the south through Homs, Hama, and on to Aleppo in the north. These trade routes experienced changes over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as technological innovations allowed for transportation over greater distances, and the flow of goods was directed increasingly toward new destinations further afield.⁸

The influx of commodities from countryside to town intensified over the last quarter of the nineteenth century and inevitably led to a swelling of population in the latter, as peasants relocated in search of economic opportunities. Yet it has proven difficult to assess just how big the town of Jabla was during this period. Ottoman populations, historically mistrustful of the motivations of government census-takers, often took pains to conceal themselves from the measuring eye of the central authority, lest their sons be conscripted into military service or they be subjected to a new tax. This had been the case following the first census in the late 1840s, when Muslims in Aleppo rioted over rumors of an impending conscription based on the census results.

Vital Cuinet, the nineteenth-century French statistician, put the size of the district of Jabla at 26,959 in the early 1890s. Historian Kemal Karpat, using the 1914 Ottoman census, puts the population of the district at 28,586, an increase of only 1,500 in twenty years. More recently, Justin McCarthy reviewed Ottoman documents and produced a population figure of 34,076 in 1911–1912. Relative statistics do shed some interesting light on the social demographics, however. Most notably, the district was unique in the coastal region for its religious homogeneity. The Ottoman census identified 105 Greek (Christian) residents, meaning Jabla was more than 99.6 percent Muslim, a religious majority unrivaled anywhere along the Mediterranean coast. What is more difficult to ascertain, however, is how many of those 28,000 Muslims were *ʿAlawites*, as the Ottomans did not distinguish between the majority Sunnis and minority sects. Anecdotal evidence suggests that while *ʿAlawites* resided throughout the sanjak of Latakia—and even in the villages that surrounded Jabla—there were relatively few in the town itself. Those

urban 'Alawites were likely employed as seasonal, itinerant labor, or as domestic help.⁹

Yet this missing distinction is relevant as 'Alawites in Jabla maintained separate religious and social institutions. They would not have visited the *zawaya* or have been members of the Sufi orders. Life for the 'Alawites of Jabla was difficult in a different way from their nineteenth-century mountain-dwelling coreligionists. Urbanized 'Alawites lived under an exploitative economic regime, widespread distrust, and prejudice from the Sunni-Arab majority, as well as the threat of persecution from the Ottoman authorities. Many celebrated the brief Egyptian occupation in 1833 as a chance to escape from their economic indenture. Meanwhile in the mountains, 'Alawites fought the same occupation with material aid from the Ottomans. This, however, was a relationship of convenience that disintegrated once the Egyptians were expelled, leading to decades of renewed, sporadic warfare between Istanbul and the villages of the Coastal Mountains.¹⁰

The ambiguity of the Ottoman stance toward the 'Alawites—considering them heretics while counting them as Muslims—finds resonance in the ambivalence of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's relations with 'Alawites. On the one hand, during the 1919 Syrian Revolt he took part in raids against 'Alawite villages that were sympathetic to the French occupation, while on the other hand, he worked with prominent 'Alawite rebels against French forces.

Al-Qassam came from a school of Islamic legal orthodoxy that was dismissive of if not outwardly hostile to the 'Alawites. Yet because he grew up in a town that had an 'Alawite minority—who, importantly, were in a subsidiary economic position to the Sunni majority—al-Qassam may have simply paid little mind to the doctrinal question of 'Alawite “Muslimness.” Ultimately, contact between al-Qassam and the 'Alawites of Jabla may have simply been limited. Unlike in earlier decades, or up in the 'Alawite mountain villages, there are no indications that there were significant tensions within the town of Jabla in the 1880s between the Ottoman authorities or the Sunni majority on one side and the 'Alawite minority on the other. In fact, many 'Alawites in the urban centers of Latakia were induced into conversion—or at least a peaceful charade of conversion—through state-sponsored education initiatives in the last quarter of the century.¹¹

If confessional and ethnic distinctions in Jabla were not the factor they were elsewhere in Bilad al-Sham, social dynamics within the town likely followed a typical pattern and were mediated through the lens of social status. Like most of provincial Bilad al-Sham, Jabla had distinct social classes in which local notables (*a'yān*) acted as necessary intermediaries between the Ottoman authorities and the provincial population. For the Ottoman au-

thorities, they provided local knowledge and were able to exert influence and maintain control over clients. For the local populations, they provided access to mechanisms of justice and security from a remote imperial bureaucracy. This mutualism was in fact a complex structure tied to multiple factors: monetary wealth, employment in government bureaucracies, hereditary belonging to a military caste, religious knowledge and credentials, and tribal and familial ties. Nor were these positions necessarily fixed within extended families. And the *a'yān* in particular were not necessarily of the local community. Instead, Ottoman military and bureaucratic elites acculturated to local conditions (language, family ties, etc.) while local elites Ottomanized through avenues such as government posts and, later, secular state-run schools.¹²

The general distinction between empowered local elites and the population en masse is instructive for our understanding of the way developments in the nineteenth century played out in Bilad al-Sham. Two social classes in particular are most relevant to this discussion of the nineteenth century: urban merchants and the religious elites. The *a'yān*, in particular the urban merchants among them, maintained an intricate web of patron-client relations with peasants from the countryside. As historians have demonstrated for the Jabal Nablus and Hama regions, the links between urban merchants and peasants in the countryside were extensive and involved social and economic transactions, from lending money for the purchase of special clothes for festive occasions to granting merchants privileged access to harvests for illicit trade.¹³

Religious elites (*'ulama'* and ranking members of the Sufi orders) were the other powerful local faction throughout much of the empire. In provincial Bilad al-Sham, their authority was not necessarily financial—though many *'ulama'* amassed substantial wealth through their control of religious endowments (*awqāf*)—but was instead social. Unlike in the larger centers of Bilad al-Sham, Jabla's religious elites would be best described as “middle *'ulama'*,” as many would have controlled smaller endowments and held less prestigious appointments in local religious courts.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Jabla, like the rest of the Ottoman Empire and the Arab provinces in particular, experienced a series of changes that resulted first from an invasion from the south, then imperial edicts from the north. The latter would lead to the reconfiguring of many of the social networks described above, bringing to bear two dominant forces in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire: a movement toward bureaucratic modernization in the form of a centralizing authority, and the accelerated commercial and cultural encounter with European powers that brought

the Arab Mediterranean deeper into a global capitalist system. The positions of both the *a'yān* and the 'ulama' class came under attack as Istanbul sought to centralize authority away from such local powers. These changes would be felt in Jabla, and in the life of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam in particular ways relating to his social position as the scion of a family of middle 'ulama' in a relatively isolated provincial outpost. This was certainly the case for 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam, who, besides holding a position of leadership in the Sufi order (a position outside of state control), also held a minor shari'a court position.¹⁴

■ In the Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Adham Mosque in Jabla, 'Izz al-Din's father, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam, delivered sermons; in the local *kuttāb* he taught the rules of Qur'anic recitation (*tajwīd*); and maybe most importantly, he acted as the *murshid*—the guide—for Jabla's Qadiri Sufi order. 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's uncle had similar responsibilities. His grandfather was also a Qadiri shaykh. It is clear, through the example of his family, that the leadership of the *ṭarīqa* and the prominent roles within the traditional institutions of Islam often overlapped.¹⁵

Sufi orders were integrated into the social and religious life of Muslims from Southeast Asia to North Africa, where Sufi shaykhs, especially in smaller communities, served as imams and *khuṭabā'* in mosques and taught in the religious schools. The Qadiri *ṭarīqa* was one of the two most popular orders in Bilad al-Sham during the Ottoman Empire, and its rapid geographic diffusion and institutionalization was likely connected to two important factors: one a result of the order's composition, and the other a result of the particular social and political context from which it emerged.

The Qadiri *ṭarīqa* was founded in twelfth-century Baghdad by its namesake, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, a Persian cleric of the conservative Hanbali legal school. The order is generally regarded as the first organized Sufi *ṭarīqa* to spread throughout the Muslim world, thanks in large part to its populist appeal, which reached beyond the masses to include members of the ruling class who hitherto had not typically been adherents of mystical paths.¹⁶ At its roots, the Qadiriyya asserted the tradition of a "sober" *ṭarīqa*, rejecting some of the early antinomian practices of individual Sufi ascetics in favor of a mysticism grounded in the shari'a. This was surely related to al-Jilani's background as a Hanbali jurist and was accomplished in part through his unadorned theosophy. As one historian of the order noted, al-Jilani's reputation grew, "but as a Hanbali preacher, not as a Sufi. He dressed like an *'ālim*, not like a Sufi."¹⁷

Similarly, the Qadiri liturgy aligned with mainstream Muslim orthodoxy,

and the *ṭarīqa*'s devotional practice focused primarily on reserved invocations of the names of God. While differing in form and content, in most Sufi orders this was realized through the practice of *dhikr*, literally the act of remembrance of God but more practically a form of meditative prayer. The Qadiri *dhikr* was the centerpiece of the *ṭarīqa*'s devotional practices and more closely resembled liturgies found in mosques during appointed prayer times than other Sufi orders. As *murshid*, 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam was responsible for instructing adepts in Jabla and leading the Qadiri *dhikr* in the *zāwiya*. This pattern, where Qadiri teachings and practices were perceived to complement rather than supplant or offend Islamic communal orthodoxies, proved to be one of the features that propelled the *ṭarīqa* rapidly across the Muslim world. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Qadiriyya had outposts from southeast Asia to Algeria, where, British consular reports suggest, it was the *ṭarīqa* with the largest number of adherents.¹⁸

The rise of the organized *ṭurūq*, most notably the Qadiriyya, coincided with what some scholars have described as the declining social and political circumstances of Muslims under the Abbasid Caliphate and the attendant dislocation and insecurity in the lead-up to and aftermath of the Mongol invasions in the thirteenth century. In times of such insecurity, organized bodies such as Sufi orders and craft guilds came to provide a social framework and fraternal institution beyond those associated with the caliphal state. This was particularly true of *ṭurūq* such as the Qadiriyya, which deviated little from Islamic orthodoxy and strengthened the extralegal adherence to the *sharī'a*.¹⁹

These orders were particularly appealing to many in the 'ulama' class, who could adopt mystical practices and join brotherhoods without compromising their position as guardians of juridical norms. It is hardly surprising, then, that al-Qassam's family were both Qadiri *murshidin* and 'ulama': by the end of the nineteenth century it was rare for members of the 'ulama' not to belong to at least one *ṭarīqa*. As the historian of religion Marshall Hodgson wrote, "Sufism supplemented the Shari'ah as a principle of unity and order, offering the Muslims a sense of spiritual unity which came to be stronger than that provided by the remnant of the caliphate." This describes the way in which Sufism spread across the Muslim *umma* and became institutionalized as a parallel and complementary system alongside the *sharī'a*. But the relationship between the *ṭurūq* and the caliphal state itself remained complex, evolving, and contingent. The decades leading up to the First World War and the case of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam and another *ṭarīqa*—the Naqshbandiyya—are particularly representative of this complexity.²⁰

■ While al-Qassam's family roots in the Qadiri *ṭarīqa* are well documented, there is some evidence that the Qadiriyya was not his family's only affiliation. One of al-Qassam's earlier biographers recounts that al-Qassam's nephew Shaykh 'Abd al-Malik al-Qassam, who, like the males in his family before him, became an imam at a Jabla mosque, claimed that 'Izz al-Din's father was also a follower of the Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa*. This is certainly likely as many 'ulama' of the time had multiple affiliations, and by the mid-nineteenth century the Naqshbandiyya were well established in Bilad al-Sham. The great Indian Naqshbandi Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1624) was himself born into a prominent Qadiri family and considered himself both a Qadiri and Naqshbandi; there has always been a particularly close association between the two *ṭurūq*. But there are particularly strong indications that foundational principles of the Naqshbandiyya may have exerted lasting and profound influence on al-Qassam. This is particularly true of his political ideology and his religious orientation, and it has been relatively unexplored by his biographers, who have been more likely to see the strands of Islamic modernist thinking in these aspects of his life. Yet, as the history of the order suggests, the relationship between Islamic modernism and the Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa* is itself a significant, if ambivalent, one.²¹

The Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa*, like many Sufi orders, emerged from central Asia and India, where it had developed in opposition to the autocratic practices of the Mughal dynasty. In the Mashriq, the order expanded as a mystical counterpoint to "intoxicated" Sufis and remained popular in part because of Ottoman sponsorship. The first Naqshbandi shaykh to successfully establish the order in Bilad al-Sham was the seventeenth-century Shaykh Muhammad Murad al-Bukhari (d. 1729) of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi branch. But it was Shaykh Maulana Khalid al-Baghdadi (the eponym of the Naqshbandi-Khalidi branch of the *ṭarīqa*; d. 1827) who, from Baghdad to Jerusalem, popularized the Naqshbandiyya beyond small groups of 'ulama' in the Arab provinces. Shaykh Khalid established *zawaya* throughout Bilad al-Sham and set the order on a path through the nineteenth century that brought it closer to the political and social levers of power, through a close—though at times mutually suspicious—relationship with the Ottoman state. Shaykh Khalid saw the Ottoman government, with its sultan-caliph, as the source of collective adherence to the shari'a and its ultimate guarantor in the face of European influence. Sultan Abdülhamid II in turn courted the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya during his period of Islamization in an attempt to bolster his credentials as the sultan-caliph while trying to unify Muslims in the face of European pressures. With this alliance in place, by the second half of the

nineteenth century, the Naqshbandi order had been firmly established in the Ottoman capital and the Arab provinces of Bilad al-Sham.²²

By the time al-Qassam was born, there were fifty-two Naqshbandi tekkes (*zawaya*) in Istanbul alone. One scholar of Sufism has noted that “the formation, spread, and adaptation of the Naqshbandiyya is part of the larger story of the institutionalization and popularization of the mystical aspects of Islam.” Yet the appeal of the Naqshbandiyya may have been more than the result of this process of institutionalization, appealing in particular to those concerned about the relative decline in economic and political power of the Muslim *umma* in the face of Europe’s capitalist expansion and its impact on domestic Ottoman policies.²³

In fact, the activist, reformist Naqshbandiyya *ṭarīqa* was among the more politically influential Sufi orders in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. Naqshbandi shaykhs in Anatolia had a long history of support for the sultan, and to a large degree they rejected the increasingly centralizing, secularizing reforms put forth by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which took power in 1908, against the Turkish Republic following the War of Independence (1919–1923). Notably, in February 1925 Naqshbandi rebels under the Kurd shaykh Sa’id recruited Kurdish peasants using a mix of nationalist and religious rhetoric and declared a jihad when the caliphate was abolished. Shaykh Sa’id’s rebellion was fueled with a mixture of anti-secularism, Muslim revivalism that employed the rhetoric of the reinstatement of the caliphate, inchoate Kurdish nationalism, and fears over Turkish reprisals against Kurds in southeast Anatolia. But if the conflict between Shaykh Sa’id’s group and the Turkish Republic was between an ethno-nationalist movement and a secular state, the former was undoubtedly facilitated by the organizational structures, and animated by the rituals of practice, found in the Naqshbandi order.²⁴

This pattern would be mirrored to varying degrees by anti-colonial rebels with strong connections to Sufi orders across the Muslim world from Mardin to Mali in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This history of how the Qadiriyya and Naqshbandiyya *ṭurūq* spread from Central Asia to Bilad al-Sham — and how ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam’s male ancestors came to follow these orders — is important. Ultimately, though, it was the order’s cosmology (in this case strict orthodoxy) and the everyday liturgical practice that had the most resonance for al-Qassam in his later life. In the dhikr circles of his early days in Jabla, he encountered rituals among adherents that he would revive later in life, and that acted as the centerpiece of his group’s practice, even in the days before his death.

■ The Naqshbandi order distinguished itself from other Sufi orders, such as the Qadiriyya, in a few meaningful ways: liturgically through the invocation of a silent *dhikr*, the degree to which it placed a premium on the *shari'a* above all other aspects of Islamic life, and its heavy involvement in the sociopolitical life of the Muslim *umma*. Other orders maintained similar practices at varying times and places, but these three aspects were uniquely Naqshbandi in their centrality.

The liturgical aspects of the Naqshbandiyya differed from the Qadiriyya most notably in the former's insistence on a *silent* form of *dhikr*. While the Qadiri *dhikr* often involved the chanting of words or fragments of words in communal unison, the silent *dhikr* of the Naqshbandiyya shunned "the use of the tongue and all but the most minimal bodily movements." In many ways, the silent *dhikr* was considered by practitioners a superior devotional act and keeps with the notion that the Naqshbandiyya thought of their *ṭarīqa* as an elite Sufi pursuit. As Hamid Algar, a historian of the order, has pointed out, "it may well be conceived that this mode of *dhikr*, restrained, rigorous and demanding, is suited only to a minority of those who embark on the spiritual path, consisting of those who have already emerged, to a significant degree, from the corporeal state, and whose bodily passions and powers have—to use traditional language—been fettered by the commands and prohibitions of the Divine Law." The silent *dhikr*, then, remains a hallmark of Naqshbandi devotional practice and marks its differentiation from the *ṭurūq*, whose adepts had yet to reach a certain spiritual rigor.²⁵

Beyond the silent *dhikr*, the Naqshbandi *ṭarīqa* is known primarily for its social and political activism, which ultimately flows from the spring of the order's focus on promoting and sustaining a Muslim polity governed by the *shari'a* alone. The insistence on the supremacy of the *shari'a* is shared by other *ṭurūq* including, as discussed, the Qadiriyya, but the Naqshbandiyya engaged far more actively in the project of institutionalizing the *shari'a* in the governance of the *umma*. This doctrine is born out in the concept of "solitude in the crowd," which has become closely associated with the order. Itzhak Weismann, a scholar of Sufism, describes this condition as "necessitated alertness to prevailing social and political circumstances," while Algar argues the Naqshbandi must be inwardly turned toward God while outwardly "immersed in the transactions and relationships that sustain Muslim society."²⁶

This combination of an inner spiritual mastery and an outward focus on the condition of the *umma* is less of a dualism than it sounds. In fact, one of the order's most significant shaykhs, Ahmad Sirhindi, saw the worldly goal

2.2 Lightning through the Clouds

of adherence to the shari‘a as the only path worth pursuing. It was through the *ṭarīqa*, which allowed Sufis to distinguish themselves from the mass of the *umma*, that, Sirhindi argued, the shari‘a would be fully implemented: “Those short-sighted ones who imagine spiritual states and moments of ecstasy to be among the goals of the path, and who suppose that visionary experience is among its purposes, inevitably remain caught up in the prison of fancy and imagination and are deprived of the perfections of the shariah.”²⁷

Doing away with the “prisons of fancy” of customary, antinomian forms of mysticism and turning instead toward the “perfections” of the shari‘a are some of the points of intersection between these particular forms of Sufism (as practiced by the al-Qassam family) and ‘Izz al-Din’s eventual turn toward the Islamic modernist movement known as Salafism.

On a practical level, there remained a resonance between the rituals and aesthetics common to groups of Naqshbandiyya, such as the *dhikr*, and those of al-Qassam and the groups of anti-colonial rebels he would form and lead over the course of his life. At the ideological, political, and practical levels, the Sufism that al-Qassam was known to have practiced at an early age seems to have been adapted and carried on in new, syncretic ways throughout the rest of his life and played a significant role in how his message was animated and received by his followers in Syria and Palestine. That Sufism was very clearly mixed with a Salafism that he later encountered within the walls of al-Azhar, one of the oldest institutions of higher education in the world.

The City of a Thousand Minarets

The century in which al-Qassam was born began inauspiciously, with a series of conflicts on the Ottoman Empire's frontiers in which European and local forces challenged the authority of the Sublime Porte: in Egypt, Napoleon invaded in 1798, and Muhammad 'Ali Pasha consolidated his power in Cairo in 1811. With the help of the Russians, Serbia became nominally independent in 1817, and a patchwork of autonomous regions developed throughout the Balkans over the first half of the century as the sultan proved unable to quell rebellions. Meanwhile, Greeks launched a war for independence in 1821. With the help of Muhammad 'Ali Pasha, the Ottomans were able to stifle Greek aspirations but at the temporary cost of their Arab provinces.¹

Muhammad 'Ali, believing that he had been offered Bilad al-Sham in exchange for his assistance with the Greek insurrection, sent his son Ibrahim Pasha north across the Sinai into the Mashriq, where he conquered Acre, Beirut, Damascus, and Aleppo. The arrival of the Egyptian occupying forces in 1833 marked a period of great discontent in communities along the coast. As the first government in Bilad al-Sham in centuries to exercise a strong central authority, the Egyptians sought to impose direct control over society. Through *corvée*, Ibrahim Pasha began public works projects, imposed direct taxation, and conscripted locals into an army modeled on the French. He inflamed sectarian tensions when, in a nod to the European powers, he cancelled the traditional fees imposed on Christian and Jewish pilgrims to the Holy Land. He also elevated non-Muslims to positions on important consultative councils while limiting the power of the Islamic courts to decide personal matters, angering many of the 'ulama' who relied on their positions with the courts for income and prestige.

To help finance the occupation, Ibrahim Pasha emulated the policies of

his father and refocused agricultural production in places such as Jabla's hinterland on cash crops of cotton and cereals bound for export to Europe. This accelerated a process begun in the preceding decades that saw a further integration of the coast's trade networks with an international exchange of goods. This exchange benefitted the Egyptians, who held quasi-monopolies on a number of raw materials, and European traders, who flooded the Mashriq with finished products. Textiles from Egypt were particularly damaging to local guilds, hurting urban economies. British consular documents note the dramatic increase in mulberry and silk production in the plains and mountains south of Jabla, while cereal and cotton yields in the sanjak of Latakia likely doubled during the period of Egyptian occupation.

In the town, however, the port of Jabla may have suffered from the increased international traffic through primary ports along the Mediterranean coast that came at the expense of the inner-Empire trade for which the Jabla port had been primarily used. Inland, the cities of Aleppo and Damascus shrank by nearly a half and a third, respectively, over the course of the occupation. Food shortages were routine as more arable land was diverted from subsistence farming to cash crops. In the mountains, rebellions persisted among groups of 'Alawites. At one point even the city of Latakia was besieged by rebels. Two pacification campaigns of village-burning, well-destroying, and orchard-cutting eventually established calm over the frontiers of Jabla's district. Once the mountains had been subdued, incidents of banditry decreased, allowing for even greater Egyptian-enforced economic productivity in Jabla's hinterland.²

Thus, the Egyptian occupation marked certain ruptures in the fabric of political life in Bilad al-Sham. The drive to centralize authority in a top-down government chipped away at the power held by local notables. Arab Christians began to exercise greater independence and to usurp privileges traditionally enjoyed by the Muslim *a'yān*. And the symbolism inherent in the overthrow of the Ottoman sultan's absolute power opened up psychological space for possible alternatives to rule from Istanbul.

Some continuities persisted, especially in the social life of a town like Jabla. Ibrahim Pasha pushed the coastal plains deeper into the world economy, but that process had started decades earlier. The rebellions that were fought in the mountains against the Egyptians were replaced by rebellions against the Ottoman administration in Damascus. In the decade before Ibrahim Pasha's forces arrived in the Mashriq, the population of the town of Hama was halved as a result of a plague and a locust infestation. Life in the Ottoman Arab provinces—especially in smaller urban centers such as Jabla—would remain precarious until the latter half of the century.³

The Ottomans retook Bilad al-Sham with diplomatic, financial, and military help from European powers in 1839. The loss of territory in the European provinces and the years of Egyptian control over the Mashriq pushed the Ottomans to initiate a period of “reform” beginning in the late 1830s. Known as the Tanzimat (reordering), these reforms were instituted in pursuit of a number of outcomes. First, the empire, a traditionally decentralized endeavor, sought to reverse course and concentrate power in the imperial center. Second, to combat the popularity of nationalist sentiment that had cost them parts of the Balkans, the Ottomans were keen to create the trappings of a modern nation-state and to push an animating political ideology: a kind of Ottoman nationalism called “Ottomanism” (*Osmanlılık*). Third, the dependence on foreign economic and military aid necessitated further institutionalized capitulations to European capital (and cultural) intrusions into the empire.

These were not mutually exclusive goals. In many ways the project of promoting Ottomanism required asserting the empire’s administrative center as a pillar in the discourse of the “nation,” while paradoxically the drive toward the tighter, centralized control of the provinces was an attempt to benefit from the economic penetration of European capitalism. This new administrative and political order “would provide a more secure framework for the growth of trade and the extension of commercial agriculture.”⁴

The period of the Tanzimat—between the expulsion of Ibrahim Pasha’s forces in 1841 and the years around al-Qassam’s birth—was one of “bureaucratic ascendancy” in which the Ottoman government sought to challenge the power of the *a’yān*. Accordingly, the empire’s bureaucratic and military institutions expanded in size and function: over the course of the century, the civilian administration grew twenty-five-fold, while the military ballooned from 24,000 in 1837 to 120,000 in the 1880s. The state expanded its services as well, building educational institutions to rival those traditionally offered by religious communities, creating “separate and parallel state education and charitable institutions.”⁵

While some families of notables turned reforms such as those concerned with land ownership to their advantage, other groups of elites were less opportunistic. The Tanzimat proved a particular challenge for the ‘ulama’ who had traditionally leveraged their hold on the institutions of education to perpetuate their authority. The sultan attempted to undermine these powers by centralizing and secularizing education. This had a significant impact on the ‘ulama’ and religious instructors in larger urban centers, but it is unknown just what impact this reform had on smaller towns at a distance from the provincial capitals. There is some evidence that in the latter half of the cen-

tury, in the cities and towns of the eastern Mediterranean, schooling was an intensely contested subject. In exploring the impact the Tanzimat had on the coast of Bilad al-Sham—and on the al-Qassam family, for whom religious education was the family business—it is the challenges in education that may have been most acutely felt.⁶

■ Throughout most of the Ottoman period, the education system was in fact a loose network of independent schools, teaching a curriculum based on religious learning that had existed in a similar format since the spread of Islam in the seventh century. Until the Tanzimat, the responsibility for educating the children of the empire was solely that of each child's religious community. For most of the empire's subjects, instruction in the *kuttāb* (the equivalent of an elementary school) involved teaching children age five and older to write, read, and memorize passages from the Qur'an, show knowledge of foundational Islamic doctrine, and complete some basic math. At the *madrasa* (secondary school), students studied more advanced religious topics, such as Islamic law and jurisprudence (*shari'a* and *fiqh*), Qur'anic recitation and exegesis (*tajwīd* and *tafsīr*), and stories and sayings of the Prophet (*aḥādīth*). This was supplemented in the late Ottoman period with grammar, math, and science.

Until the Tanzimat, most Muslim boys in the Ottoman provinces were educated in institutions indistinguishable from the Islamic religious context. The classes of *katātīb* and *madāris* were often held within mosques and were funded, administered, and taught by employees of the religious endowments (*awqāf*). In larger urban centers such as Damascus and Aleppo, *madāris* had buildings independent of traditional mosques but operated as places of worship. Similarly, religious instruction also took place in Sufi *zawaya* under the guidance of the shaykhs and senior members of the order. Acknowledging this spatial comingling of education and worship makes the accelerated expansion of Christian schools in Bilad al-Sham, and the subsequent drive toward the secularization of state-controlled education, an even greater rupture with tradition.⁷

As part of accommodating the demands of European powers for further autonomy for the minority Christian communities they patronized, Istanbul acceded to these Christian minorities the right to construct schools of their own. By the middle of the century, Protestant missionaries from the United States and United Kingdom were rapidly catching up to their Catholic counterparts. In coastal towns, missionaries established comprehensive education systems—from primary through secondary schools—along Western pedagogical lines. Once the Syrian Protestant College was opened

in 1866 and the Jesuit institution Université St. Joseph followed in 1874, Christian students in the province of Beirut had access to a whole educational ecosystem independent of Ottoman control.

While these schools were also open to Muslims who wished to attend, relatively few Muslim children took up the missionaries' offer (as "modern" as the curriculum was, it was also unabashedly proselytizing); yet these schools, coupled with the power of European states, were an innovation that caused much self-reflection among both Ottoman administrators and the *a'yān* in Bilad al-Sham. According to Ottoman correspondence in 1887, missionaries had been opening "large" and "exalted" schools in "nearly every sub-district" of the province, "educating Muslim and Christian children gratis and seducing and convincing the children of those who [did] not send their children to their schools . . . [that they were] corrupting the subject's upbringing." This sense of corruption played a pivotal role in the Ottoman response.⁸

In the early years of the Tanzimat, the Ottomans established state-run schools (beginning with the elementary level) based on a standard, state-sanctioned curriculum in Anatolia and elsewhere in the empire. Not only was the "modernization" of education part and parcel of the Tanzimat project of centralization, but these modern schools contributed to the nationalist project by indoctrinating children into Ottomanism. This program was modified and expanded under Sultan Abdülhamid II. Abdülhamid, who came to power in 1876, instituted what has been described as a period of "Islamization" in the empire. Following the Ottoman defeats in the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877–1878, the empire lost many of its Christian territories and was increasingly composed of largely homogeneous Muslim provinces. In response, Abdülhamid emphasized the Ottoman claim to the caliphate and increased support for conservative 'ulama' and Sufi shaykhs in what one historian has described as a bid to use Islam as a symbol of unity against "an increasingly hostile Christian World."⁹

During Abdülhamid's reign, the wholesale "adoption" of foreign models of education in the earlier years of the Tanzimat gave way to "adaptation" of those models, and—without abandoning Ottomanism altogether—an increased emphasis was placed on an "Islamic" character over a "Western" one. This was particularly true of the new, specialized college for bureaucrats, Istanbul's Mekteb i-Mülkiyye. By 1870, an increasing number of children from *a'yān* families in the Arab provinces were being sent to these schools as local elites pushed their children away from traditional vocations and toward the burgeoning Ottoman civil administration. Coupled with the expanded specializations in the higher levels, the structures of primary

through secondary schools were increasingly codified throughout the empire. More and more state schools were built in the provinces following a standardized curriculum.¹⁰

However, in Bilad al-Sham, religious schools remained independent of state control. At the end of the nineteenth century, this autonomy, the impetus from Istanbul to reform education, and the intellectual competition from Christian schools produced ad hoc changes to local schools and a diversity of voices on the question of what constituted a “proper” Islamic education. To this chorus of Ottoman governors and reformers, the ‘ulama’ increasingly added their own voices.¹¹

Yet the ‘ulama’ were hardly pedagogical primitives clutching tightly to tradition. Instead, they took active roles in curriculum development, warning of the evils inherent in the missionary schools. In Beirut, for instance, a short-lived benevolent society, Jam‘iyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya, was founded in 1875 by a small group that included Hajj Sa‘d Hamada, Shaykh Ibrahim al-Adab, and Shaykh Yusuf al-Asir, three prominent Beiruti ‘ulama’. The society advocated an “alternative curriculum both to the traditional madrasas and *kuttābs*, based as they were on memorizing religious scriptures, and to the monopoly of missionary education.” The ‘ulama’ of Beirut established Muslim schools modeled on the pedagogical and curricular format of the missionary schools in the city in the late 1870s.¹²

Up the coast from Beirut, in Latakia and Jabla, such changes came shortly after those in the provincial capital. The sanjak of Latakia became a particular focus of state education reform in part as a conversion and counter-conversion effort directed at ‘Alawites. State schools became a priority as ‘Alawites were increasingly targeted by missionaries in the 1880s. Eight elementary (*ibtidai*) schools were set up by the Ottomans in the sanjak of Latakia to strengthen the available educational offerings. By 1893, an “education commission” composed of local ‘ulama’—primarily state-appointed muf-tis and *awqāf* administrators—was organized in Jabla to administer the district’s state schools.¹³

One of the members of Jabla’s education commission was ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam. When his son ‘Izz al-Din turned twelve, the Ottomans doubled down on their reforms in Latakia, upgrading the primary state schools in the district of Jabla to secondary (*rüşdiyye*—for youths aged eleven to sixteen) status and appointing an inspector to oversee their operations. Ottoman records show that at the turn of the century, Latakia was one of the best-served sanjaks for state education in the Arab provinces, holding the highest density of state secondary schools for both boys and girls. This blanketing of

the sanjak seemed to have paid off, as some 'Alawites showed an increasing willingness near the end of the century to cede to the dominant Hanafi legal orthodoxies of the Sunni majority in exchange for the security of state protection and economic opportunities such conversion offered.¹⁴

Despite the strength of state schooling during al-Qassam's childhood in Jabla, it is not known if he attended any of these Ottoman-built schools. Whatever resilience the traditional Islamic education had to the influence of Ottoman priorities, the Islamic education al-Qassam would have received from his father and uncles, in the *kuttāb* associated with the Ibn Adham Mosque, or in the Qadiri *zāwiya*, was not immune to the forces of reform coming from both local and regional religious authorities.

Shortly after al-Qassam's birth, an Islamic benevolent society—modeled on the Jam'iyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya of Beirut—was founded in the sanjak of Latakia with the goal of opening new Islamic schools in the subprovince. Missionary schools had arrived in Latakia a decade earlier, and the benevolent society sought to challenge their appeal as they had done with some success in the capital. The work of the benevolent society was bolstered when, as part of a campaign to preach to provincial Muslims on the benefits of educational reforms and to warn them of the proselytizing done in Christian schools, prominent shaykhs from Damascus and Aleppo spread out across Bilad al-Sham. This propagandizing campaign was pushed by both Istanbul and the 'ulama' in the bigger urban centers. While the practice of traveling 'ulama' was halted in the middle of the 1890s when the Ottomans thought better of empowering one group of rivals against another, reformist ideas had been greatly helped by the practice, and the Damascene 'ulama' had furthered contacts with like-minded scholars in smaller communities.¹⁵

How the benevolent society—or the traveling 'ulama' for that matter—influenced reform in the religious schools of Jabla is not known for certain, but what can be said is that, as a child, al-Qassam was educated in a place where the reforming of both traditional Islamic education and the state-sponsored Tanzimat system was a primary goal of the district's civil and religious elite. Had al-Qassam not become an 'ālim himself, the intersection of these competing priorities would be less of a matter of review here, but al-Qassam received an education that was satisfactory enough that when he finished his preparatory years he matriculated to the most important center for religious learning in the Sunni Muslim world: al-Azhar University in Cairo. The only comment made on his early education in his biographies is sourced to an interview conducted years later that suggests he was a student in the circle of a Beiruti 'ālim named Shaykh Salim Tabbara. This sort of

education was not uncommon for the sons of ‘ulama’ and the most accomplished religious students, who would often study in the private salons of prominent ‘ulama’.¹⁶

■ As noted, ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam, ‘Izz al-Din’s father, was an important voice on matters of education in the town of Jabla. He taught at the religious schools in the town, and the Ottoman *salname* (yearbook) in 1894 shows that ‘Abd al-Qadir was an appointed member of the district’s Instructional Branch (*maaref şubesi*). Like his father, grandfather, and uncles, al-Qassam would remain employed as an instructor in religious schools throughout his life. What those religious schools taught, the way students were instructed, and the development of attractive alternative venues for learning were all important concerns at the end of the nineteenth century. With the proliferation of Christian missionary schools that accompanied the continued expansion of European economic, political, and cultural presence in the empire on one hand, and the pace of standardized state schooling with its promise of social advancement on the other, the ability of the ‘ulama’ to presume authority in matters of education was under assault. But the reformist discourse concerning education was hardly the first time ‘ulama’ had been forced to alter their education practices. While the Islamic schools of Bilad al-Sham had preserved a pedagogical system largely unaltered for centuries, ‘ulama’ had undoubtedly molded the curriculum with changes in state patronage of legal schools or the shifting popularity of specific Sufi orders. Nor was it the most difficult challenge to the ‘ulama’ in those decades.

The Tanzimat’s incremental changes were designed to undermine the ‘ulama’s influence on the community’s social life. Yet, while the ‘ulama’ concerned themselves with responding to the challenges of the Tanzimat’s education reforms at the end of the nineteenth century, their most basic source of power—their claim to juridical authority—came under attack from within their own ranks.¹⁷

The reforms of the Tanzimat, and its centralizing impulse in particular, were directed in part toward the authority of local elites that in Jabla included members of al-Qassam’s family. Istanbul’s ad hoc reforms to education in Latakia were especially important as the debates about Islamic education grew louder. Were the ways in which Ottoman Muslims were being taught—the pedagogy of the traditional institutions of the *kuttāb* and *madrasa*—partly to blame for the military, technological, and economic deficiencies of the Ottomans vis-à-vis the Europeans? The perception that Islam was now, after more than a millennium of unprecedented expansion from India to Andalusia and the Atlantic coast of Africa, losing territory to European empires and

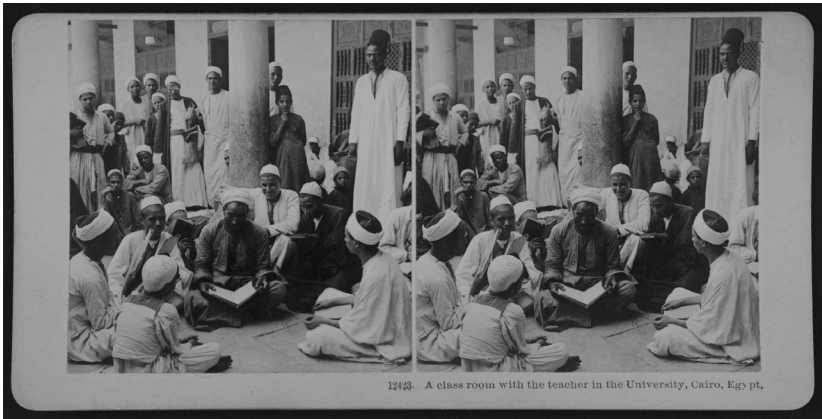


Figure 3. Students and teachers at al-Azhar, Cairo; Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-DIG-stereo-1501860].

inchoate nation-states was a troubling conclusion for many younger ‘ulama’ to consider.

While the Sublime Porte attempted to “modernize” by moving from adaptation to adoption (and back) of European military structures and school curricula, an increasing number of religious scholars in Damascus and Cairo began to challenge the traditional gatekeepers of “high Islam” using a very similar modernist discourse. But while the state often looked outside its realm for cues, this group of scholars turned to the very sources of Islam, which they claimed had been abandoned over centuries of rapid political expansion: the example of the earliest Muslim community, the “pious forefathers” (*al-salaf al-salih*). The movements this idea spawned would be known as Salafism, and it became an important ideological guidepost for al-Qassam. In 1900, at the age of eighteen, he would head out of Jabla through the town’s northern gate to Latakia, then on to Cairo—an epicenter of Salafist reform at the turn of the century.

■ The Egyptian intellectual Ahmad Amin began his studies at al-Azhar at the same time as ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam. In his memoirs, he described walking into the mosque-university complex for the first time in 1900 and hearing “a strange noise, a humming like that of bees.” Amin, accompanied by his father, removed his shoes in reverent silence and walked down a long corridor that eventually opened into a large hall encircled by rows of innumerable grayish marble columns. Around these pillars were high armchairs, secured by thick iron chains, upon which sat shaykhs lecturing to circles of students

in white gowns and black cloaks. Other students milled about among the columns or found rest on the red mats that covered the floor.¹⁸

The hall, alive with the murmurs of instruction and inquiry, gave way to the massive open-air courtyard. There, students congregated to eat lunch and preserve loaves of country bread—*‘ish baladi*—in the hot sun. Al-Qassam arrived at al-Azhar along with a group of other Syrians, including his brother Fakhr al-Din and a Damascene named ‘Izz al-Din al-Tanukhi. Like other students arriving at al-Azhar, he likely carried with him a chest of clothes, a basket of provisions that could have included such loaves of bread, and little else. As Amin had at roughly the same time, he would have entered through the Barbers’ Gate (Bab al-Mizayinin), the main entrance among the half dozen or so doors that kept the busy streets outside the walls—with their people, camels, and braying donkeys—at bay.¹⁹

Al-Azhar was built as a mosque in the late tenth century under the Fatimid dynasty, and after Saladin’s conquest two hundred years later it evolved into an institution of Sunni learning. Over the centuries the mosque-school complex grew both physically and in terms of its standing within the Muslim world. The ‘ulama’ who taught there and served as its guiding force over time became the principal intermediaries between ruling elites and the religious class. The nineteenth century was an important moment for al-Azhar as it struggled with historic growth in student population and pressures brought by the arrival of European concepts of educational modernity.²⁰

Neighboring buildings crowd in closely, making it difficult for someone to appreciate the size of the complex from the outside. The structure was repeatedly restored after its founding, with walls, minarets, and doors being grafted, erected, and opened onto and through older buildings. When al-Qassam was a student, five minarets stood around the complex, after one of those built by ‘Abd al-Rahman Katkhuda in the eighteenth century was torn down in 1896. For holiday feasts and during Ramadan, the minarets were decorated with lanterns. From each of them came the calls to prayer.

As Amin described, the interior loggias of the mosque were covered in carpets and prayer mats and populated by rows of graying columns. The interior gave way to a large courtyard in the middle with a floor of worn and polished white marble. The enormous courtyard was surrounded by porticos in which various collections of students congregated. These groups were typically, though not strictly, segregated by place of origin and *madhhab*, or legal school. At the turn of the century, as many as ten thousand students and two hundred teachers congregated at the base of the nearly three hundred pillars that line the courtyard. There, a chair would be chained to the pillar, and students would sit on sheepskin mats around their teacher.

Taha Husayn, the blind theoretician who towered above twentieth-century Egyptian intellectual life, experienced the sensations of al-Azhar's environment differently. He described the massive courtyard as "quiet" and "cool" upon his arrival in the mornings. But by the afternoon the world inside the walls was a bustling hive of activity. Sleeping students, fastidious attendants, cats, and vendors all could be seen among and around the circles of students at the feet of their teachers. Accounts from al-Azhar in the 1890s report that the facilities struggled to keep up with a student body ten times bigger than it had been just a century before. By al-Qassam's arrival, some improvements to these conditions had been made, but only so much could be done in the intervening years.²¹

Between 10 and 20 percent of the student body lived within the walls of the complex. It is not known whether al-Qassam was one of them, but if he was, he most certainly lived in *Riwaq al-Shawwam*, a space dedicated for students from the Syrian provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It was a structure located adjacent to the old sanctuary and contained sleeping quarters, a kitchen, a library with an impressive collection, a washroom, and a latrine. As the residential porticos went, it was one of the more well appointed and sizable ones in the complex.²²

Riwaq al-Shawwam had been the site of a cholera outbreak and riot only five years before al-Qassam arrived. Twelve students were arrested, while sixty "Syrian-Turks" were deported back to Bilad al-Sham. British documents report that this event was seen as particularly troubling by Egypt's nominal ruler, the Khedive Abbas Helmi II. Conditions improved somewhat at al-Azhar in the years after the outbreak, and by the turn of the century, many of the most significant public health issues had been addressed.²³

Students lived a nearly monastic existence. They typically wore the *ṭā-qiya* (a white skullcap), long garments (*jallābiya* or *thawb*), and, in the colder months, heavier wool cloaks. Teachers wore turbans, while attendants wore the fez. Breakfast was usually Egyptian falafel (*ṭa'miya*) or sweetened porridge (*balila*), followed by a lunch of beans (*fūl*), pickled vegetables such as turnips and peppers, and, in the winter, lentil soup. Lessons were mediated by prayer times, and students regrouped into each new circle following the mass prayers throughout the day. Again, Amin tells us that in the morning he studied Hanafi jurisprudence (his *madhhab*) followed by recitation of the Qur'an and lessons in grammar. In the afternoon he attended "a lesson in the sciences which were called 'modern sciences,' namely, geography and arithmetic."²⁴ The more advanced curriculum at al-Azhar involved jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*), and in some cases philosophy and literature.

Egyptian teenagers who wanted to be students at al-Azhar presented papers to an administrative shaykh who would test their knowledge of the Qur'an for suitability in enrollment. These new pupils would have memorized most, if not all, of the text as students at their *katātīb* and would have a demonstrable ability to read and write. Shortly after al-Qassam left the school, its administrators eased admittance regulations. Arab students were required, on admittance, to have memorized at least a quarter of the Qur'an. They were also required to swear to follow the rules of the shaykhs and conduct themselves in good order.²⁵

Students were expected to review the day's lesson before the circle formed, conducting a mental inventory of the points they understood and those for which they required more explanation. This intense intellectual and spiritual environment produced what one historian described as industriousness and "generally good behavior" among the students. There was also a great deal of surveillance on the students of al-Azhar whenever they left the sanctuary, and their occasional misbehavior brought reprobation from school authorities.²⁶

The school received support through its massive *awqāf* endowments and inheritance funds from all over the Muslim world. While there were no tuition fees per se, often there was social pressure to contribute to the upkeep of the institution and livelihood of the teachers. Some students received remittances from their families back home, while others pursued more industrious methods of funding. During al-Qassam's residency at al-Azhar, the school distributed on average thirteen thousand loaves of bread to students and teachers each morning. These loaves did double duty, as the surplus was sold by students and teachers via proxies outside the complex's walls. While teachers received limited financial support for the actual teaching positions (though some also held shari'a court positions or gave private lessons), many were equally engaged in this economy.²⁷

A tale of such industriousness in 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam during his time at al-Azhar is recounted in both Abdallah Schleifer's and Husayn 'Ali Khalaf's biographies: Al-Qassam's Syrian companion 'Izz al-Din al-Tanukhi, unfamiliar with deprivation, asked al-Qassam what they could do to raise money to support themselves. "We were studying in al-Azhar together and we were short of money. I asked the Sheikh, 'What do we do now for funds?'" Al-Qassam suggested that al-Tanukhi prepare an Arab sweet called *nammura*. When al-Tanukhi's father, a Damascene notable, passed by the school while visiting Cairo, his son became embarrassed in front of his father, saying that al-Qassam was responsible for the idea of selling the sweets. "Excellent! He is teaching you to be self-sufficient!" the father responded.²⁸

We know what al-Qassam likely ate, what he wore, and the rough outline of his daily routine. What we don't know is what he thought about during the lectures. Was he like Ahmad Amin, confused by the cadence of the lessons and homesick for his previous school? Or was he rapt like Taha Husayn, though impatient with the rambling chains of *ahādīth*, recited in full by the teacher? At the time, there was no standard expectation for completion of one's studies, though most finished their program in five to ten years, depending on the expected station upon graduation. Al-Qassam, described in many places as a bright and diligent student, seems to have finished on time with his cohort. But while we're not able to make judgments about what al-Qassam thought of what he heard at al-Azhar, we do have some idea of what that may have been.²⁹

■ In the 1890s Egypt was experiencing a period of relative stability. Twenty years after the 'Urabi Revolt failed to oust European control, Khedive 'Abbas II kept his anti-colonial, nationalist sentiment a veiled secret, while the well-known 'ālim Muhammad 'Abduh returned from the exile imposed on him for his alleged nationalist activities. In 1895 'Abduh, the scholar most closely associated with the Salafi movement, took on the task of reforming the curriculum and examination criteria at al-Azhar, where he had been teaching theology, rhetoric, and Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*). Over the next decade his reforms were implemented piecemeal and met with significant resistance from the institutional 'ulama'. These tensions percolated as 'Abduh's Salafi arguments were aimed at what he regarded as the ossified religious institutions personified by al-Azhar's traditional leadership. Along with his disciple Rashid Rida, 'Abduh pushed the reformist line, and Salafi ideologies became increasingly popular. It was into this climate that al-Qassam arrived in Cairo.³⁰

The Salafi movement, which has had variations over time in Islamic history, reemerged in Mashriq in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The Salafi movement advocated for an intellectual return to the practices of the "pious forefathers," arguing that Islam had deviated from the correct path as outlined by that first generation of Muslims. This deviation, the Salafis claimed, had made Islam vulnerable to foreign corruption. They directed blame at the 'ulama' of the traditional institutions of law and education for perpetuating the blind adherence (*taqlīd*) to the rulings of earlier religious authorities. For these Salafis, *taqlīd* was the anti-intellectual preservation of an Islam that denied the "true" Islam as envisioned by *al-salaf al-salih*.³¹

In practical terms, then, Salafism was an elitist trend among the 'ulama' who sought to rid legal practice of various innovations (*bid'ā*) that they saw as

antithetical to the example of the original community of believers in Islam. These innovations came in the centuries following Islam's early expansion from the Arabian Peninsula, through North Africa and into southern Europe, and westward through the Indian subcontinent. As ritual practice and belief as outlined in the Qur'an mixed with preexisting local customs ('urf), the essence of Islam's message was slowly diluted. The 'ulama', who through their institutions of jurisprudence were supposed to act as guardians of proper Muslim practice, had become unable to distinguish what was proscribed from what was prescribed.

Some Salafis of the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo were thus modernist 'ulama', particularly interested in the nature of Islam in a world of individuated nation-states, liberalism, and Europe's position in the Muslim world. Some Salafis, on the other hand, were primarily focused on the moral improvement of their local community.³²

Al-Qassam's time at al-Azhar overlapped with both periods of 'Abduh's and Rida's involvement in the school's intellectual life. Some, with the benefit of hindsight, have been eager to link al-Qassam closely to them both, while others are more circumspect. Muhammad Hullah, citing an interview with 'Izz al-Din's eldest daughter, Maymana al-Qassam, writes that al-Qassam only "made contact" with intellectuals in Cairo, including 'Abduh and Rida.

While there are no documents, and only conflicting oral accounts, attesting to al-Qassam's tutelage under either, it is safe to say that the contributions of 'Abduh's mentor Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (who died in 1897 in exile), 'Abduh, and Rida to Salafi discourse and challenges to Islamic institutional orthodoxies would have been difficult to avoid in that environment. As Albert Hourani described Cairo during this period, Salafism was "in the air."³³

The debate, then, over al-Qassam's connection to 'Abduh is misplaced. The formality of registration in lesson circles at al-Azhar in 1900 was ad hoc. On the one hand, it is unlikely that al-Qassam sat in 'Abduh's circle, or developed a relationship with Egypt's grand mufti, as some have suggested. On the other hand, al-Qassam was probably one of the hundreds of students who attended 'Abduh's popular lectures on such topics as al-Jurjani and rhetoric, or *tafsīr*, which were held in the period between sunset and evening prayers. In this latter scenario, then, al-Qassam was a student of 'Abduh's in a broadly defined sense. Yet regardless of the formality of the relationship, or the proximity between the two, 'Abduh was the leading figure of the Salafi reform movement at al-Azhar, and this influence on the young 'ālim is difficult to deny. Coming out of al-Azhar, al-Qassam was a Salafi. With his return

to Jabla, and later as a teacher and preacher in Haifa, he wove clearly Salafist ideas about moral reform into the fabric of the community's life around him.

■ The impact of Salafist doctrine on al-Qassam's religious outlook is clear. In the 1920s, for instance, he engaged in very public debates over Islamic orthodoxy and was an active voice for the Salafist position. But the Salafism for which he became known was in many ways the product of his time at al-Azhar. It was something he came to believe in while in Cairo. Sufism, on the other hand, was his birthright.

Sufism, as a set of diverse religious practices and beliefs held by Muslims over the last millennium, is difficult to describe in singular terms. The antagonisms between Sufis and Salafis (broadly defined) have generally been ascribed to the latter's view that mysticism was a form of *bid'ā* that had contributed to Islam's moving away from its basic tenets. While some Salafi movements held such a view, others were more equivocal, with localized critiques targeted at a particular figure or practice, in a particular place, at a particular time. The modernist reformers around the turn of the century in Cairo and in Damascus expressed a wide variety of opinions on the acceptability of the mystical dimension of the Islamic faith, but they were generally open to aspects of Islamic practice that were colloquially considered "mystical" but violated nothing in their readings of the shari'a.³⁴

The Sufism as practiced by al-Qassam's family fell into this category. It was an activist one, with a strong dose of asceticism and emphasis on group adherence to the shari'a. This position, and the Salafi discourse on Muslim renewal, were never mutually exclusive.

There is little doubt that upon the completion of his studies at al-Azhar, al-Qassam had become a Salafi. He framed his ministry in typical Salafist terms, and from the evidence available to us, showed little concern for amending or abrogating what had been common Sufi practices in Jabla.

The debate among al-Qassam biographers over the primacy of his Salafism or his Sufism is undermined by the fact that these practices—the brotherly institution of the *zāwiya*, the silent meditative *dhikr*, the asceticism—were practices that would run throughout al-Qassam's life as *his* practices, not *Sufi* practices. While al-Qassam was a thoughtful and engaged *ʿālim* on these questions, as we will see, there is no evidence to suggest that he condemned these practices and ample evidence to show that he perpetuated them.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Sufi orders fought against colonialism and secular republicanism in West Africa, the Maghrib, the Mashriq, Anatolia, and Central Asia. All of these movements were differ-

ent in significant ways, but what animated them and connected them was not a common theosophy but the community among men that these orders created. The Sufi institutions offered an environment in which like-minded religious men could congregate, strengthen the bond between them, and in the end, go to war together.

The Soldier Shaykh

Al-Qassam graduated from al-Azhar in 1909 and returned to Jabla, where he began preaching at the Ibrahim Ibn Adham Mosque and possibly at al-Mansuri, a smaller mosque south of Ibn Adham, closer to the port. He took a job teaching in the school associated with the Qadiri *ṭarīqa*. There, he added a number of classes, including those on *tafsīr* and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). He also seems to have introduced what ‘Abd al-Rahman Murad describes as “modern sciences.”¹ In the parlance of al-Azhar at the time, this would mean some elementary mathematics, geography, and practical astronomy from medieval Islamic thinkers. If al-Qassam had been inspired by Muhammad ‘Abduh, as indications suggest, he may have taught lessons from Ibn Khaldun’s *Muqaddima*, the great fourteenth-century social science text. Repeating a pattern he would employ later in Haifa, he taught children during the day and adults in the evening.²

We also begin to see the practical application of al-Qassam’s worldview of an activist Islam engaged with the moral issues of the day. His Friday sermons had a significant impact on the habits of the townspeople: encouragement of attendance at the mosque, a prohibition on alcohol, the keeping of the Ramadan fast, and the enforcement of “*shari‘a* standards in the town.” These were the actions of someone who had been deeply affected by the Salafi movement, centered in the university from which he had just graduated. This campaign, writes Bashir Nafi, was evidence that “the young reformist *‘ālim* was upholding the tenets of ‘high’ Islam against popular religion.”

In September 1911, the Italians — latecomers to the scramble for Africa — invaded the Ottoman Maghrib (North Africa). Against the Europeans sailing across the Mediterranean were roughly five thousand Ottoman regulars,

a few hundred officers, and an unknown number of indigenous fighters drafted to protect their homes from a much larger and better-armed force. From an early point, the Ottomans saw little hope in holding on to the Vilayet of Tripolitania (Wilayat Trablus Gharb—what is today Libya), and much of the fighting was relegated to the interior, to be conducted by guerilla fighters with strong connections to tribal groups and Sufi orders.³

The European invasion of Tripolitania was the first European colonial intrusion into Ottoman territory al-Qassam would experience in his lifetime. Back in Jabla, al-Qassam's message in his sermons began to include the vocabulary of jihad against foreign threats. That rhetoric of jihad had been nurtured by both state and religious authorities eager to mobilize mass support behind a cause that was given few other resources. This was certainly the case when, in 1912, the leader of the Senussis (a political body and Sufi *ṭarīqa* based in Cyrenaica), Ahmad al-Sharif al-Sanussi, appealed to the shaykhs of al-Azhar for *fatāwa* in support of the struggle against the Italians.⁴

Al-Qassam's sense of an interconnected *umma* in both a global and Ottoman imperial sense, and thus his concern for what was happening more than a thousand miles away in North Africa, had likely been fortified by his years in Cairo. "Pan-Islamism" had found a home at al-Azhar, leading one British official to write around the time of al-Qassam's graduation that "the opinions of men who have studied at El Azhar enjoy the respect throughout the Moslem world, and effect of their advocacy of pan-Islamism when they return to their homes should be borne in mind."⁵ Consequently, al-Qassam took on such advocacy and was openly recruiting military-aged men in Jabla for an expedition to the Maghrib to join the *mujahidin* fighting the European invaders. He also raised funds to pay for the insurgency and to support the families of his men while they were away. Al-Qassam may have recruited as many as 250 men from Latakia to fight with him. He and his men made their way in the late summer of 1912 to the Ottoman port city of Alexandretta (Iskanderun in modern day Turkey), about 120 miles to the north of Jabla. There, like other Ottoman subjects who had earlier volunteered for the same cause, they awaited permission and aid from Istanbul to travel to the Maghrib to join in the fight.⁶

However, by the summer of 1912 the Italian-Ottoman War had come to a standstill, with the Europeans firmly in control of the coast and the Ottoman military and its irregulars inland. At the same time, nationalist uprisings in Albania were incurring significant losses of Ottoman territory and manpower, and threatened to spill over to other Balkan states. Seizing the opportunity presented by the stalemate in North Africa, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the movement now in power in Istanbul, reached

an agreement with the Italians and conceded some territory and autonomy in the Maghrib.

Over a month passed, and it was conveyed to al-Qassam that he would be receiving neither imperial assent nor aid in his mission. With the changing fortunes of the empire, the Ottoman authorities ordered him back to Jabla. Most biographies report that he and his men returned home, where the money that had been raised was used to build a mosque and where the weapons that had been bought for the fighting were stored for what was eventually to be his insurgency against the French after the war.

However, not everyone is convinced that al-Qassam returned to Jabla so easily. His family insists that he and some of his compatriots made the trip — like many Ottoman army officers had before him — in disguise and despite government prohibition. If this is the case, it would have been a brief engagement, taking place in 1913 between his return to Jabla and the outbreak of the First World War, while a sustained insurgency was still being fought between anti-colonial rebels in the interior and Italian positions on the coast.⁷

The Italian episode further exposed cracks between Istanbul and the Arab provinces. The Ottoman abandonment of the campaign in the Maghrib was a cold calculation to cut losses in the imperial periphery so as to concentrate increasingly scarce resources on threats closer to the metropole. But to many in the Mashriq, the sultan and the CUP had abandoned not a campaign but Libyans — fellow Arab Muslims — to Italian colonization. Less than a century after the sultan had introduced Ottomanism to stave off the advances of ethnic nationalism, in conceding North Africa, Istanbul was exposing itself to rhetorical attacks from nascent Arab nationalists: that their priorities lay not in the Arab provinces but in the restive, mixed Balkan territories that had taxed the empire's treasury for decades.

■ According to the traditional historical view of Arab nationalism, the schism between Arab nationalists and Ottoman Turks, exacerbated by the centralizing reforms of the nineteenth century and the perceived abandonment of North Africa to the Italians, came to a head in the First World War. After receiving promises from the British, the sharif of Mecca, Husayn bin 'Ali, rallied tribes loyal to him from the Arabian Peninsula and, with the help of an enterprising Arab Bureau intelligence officer, aided the British army in pushing the Ottoman forces out of the Mashriq and up toward Anatolia.⁸

Of course, this is a simplistic rendition of what, like almost any war, was a messy and complicated affair. Instead, the majority of military-age Arab men in the Mashriq fought on the Ottoman side. The vast majority of Arab Ottoman subjects were conscripted into the Ottoman military through a mas-

sive conscription campaign known as the *seferberlik*. Most of these men were loyal to the empire and to the sultan, and it is unlikely that joining an Arab revolt would have occurred to them. The few Arab officers from the Mashriq who did defect to the revolt did so only after they had been taken prisoner by the British.⁹

Al-Qassam volunteered for the Ottoman Army. Rejecting the administrative posts typically filled by members of the ‘ulama’, he actively sought military training and was posted as a chaplain, possibly at the Damascus military school, before being stationed at the garrison south of Damascus during the war.¹⁰

The First World War devastated Bilad al-Sham. Locusts and drought exacerbated an already precarious agricultural harvest, handicapped as it was by a shortage of able-bodied laborers in the fields. Food shortages led to price hikes and famine. As many as half a million Ottoman-Syrians died of starvation and the diseases such conditions caused. The Entente Powers’ blockade of the Syrian coast cut off all supplies coming via the Mediterranean. The tax burden became unsustainable, and as the war progressed, increasingly desperate civil servants and tax collectors used their position to advantage themselves.¹¹

Desperation was rampant and desertion was not uncommon. Abdallah Hanna interviewed one deserter from Latakia, who walked off his post in Beersheba in the desert of southern Palestine sometime in 1917. The farmer, identified as Ahmad Hamadi, walked north to Damascus, then on to Homs, then to the coast and eventually Jabla, where he found respite in the Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Adham Mosque. The journey of nearly five hundred miles left him close to death. “He was wretched with near-starvation because people had no food to give—due to their own poverty, as well as fear of the Turks, and because of the sheer number of deserters like him in the streets.” At his lowest, he “crept through the streets weeping” before an older woman fed him some bread. Eventually he was reunited with his family, but he remained in hiding for the rest of the war.¹²

At the end of the war, al-Qassam left Damascus and returned to Jabla. At first, French and British forces occupied parts of the Mashriq as the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration. In compliance with the principles of the Sykes-Picot Agreement signed between the British and French in 1916, in which the French claimed Syria and Lebanon, the British withdrew, leaving the French and Britain’s Arab Revolt ally Amir Faysal in control of parts of Greater Syria.

After leaving Damascus, al-Qassam’s story once again becomes murky. We know that al-Qassam took to the mountains of Jabal Sahyun, northwest

of Latakia, to conduct an insurgency against the French. They had landed in Beirut in October 1918 and in Alexandretta that December. One hundred twenty miles of coast lay between the French Armée du Levant and Jabla in both directions.

Resistance to the French occupation in the mountains of Latakia and elsewhere began in 1919. Rebels received weapons and material from Kemalist allies in their southern Anatolian strongholds, or from Sharifian contacts in Damascus. The area in which al-Qassam operated was described by Philip Hitti, the historian of Syria, as comprising “deep valleys, rugged ravines and steep cliffs which provided the Syrian branch of the Assassins in the Middle Ages with their stronghold and the schismatic Moslems called Nusayris with their retreat.” The fighting in this territory was characterized by the type of irregular warfare that proved difficult for the French to combat. Al-Qassam was joined by a group of men from Jabla. Most were probably confederates from his attempted voyage to Libya who had survived the war. Others were Qadiri disciples of his father’s.¹³

Other sources say that al-Qassam joined rebel outfits already formed in Latakia, including the forces led by prominent rebel commanders ‘Umar al-Bitar and Shaykh Salih al-‘Ali, or that he later joined forces with Ibrahim Hananu near Aleppo. Another story has al-Qassam’s militia engaged in a sectarian conflict with ‘Alawite bands “that had come down from the mountains and had begun to occupy the orchards and farmland outside of Jebba [sic].” In this account, the invading French forces co-opted sectarian tensions between ‘Alawites and their Sunni neighbors in a bid to undermine the fighting capabilities of Sunni militias by deploying ‘Alawite proxies. After the ‘Alawites were pushed from the area surrounding Jabla, the story goes, the French moved in and al-Qassam’s militia retreated to the village of Zanzqafa in Jabal Sahyun to begin the insurgency.¹⁴

The rebel outfits in the north and west of Syria were a disparate mix of groups. Some were ethnically homogeneous, composed of Arabs, Turks, Kurds, or Circassians, while others were heterogeneous and representative of a particular area. Some groups were nationalist with strong ties to the Sharifian regime in Damascus, while others were “Ottomanist” or, looking north toward the independence fight in Anatolia, Kemalist. A few groups were less politically inclined and used the pretense of widespread insurgency in the countryside for criminal ends. The majority of these bands (*‘iṣāba*, pl. *‘iṣābāt*) were led by an individual whose authority was the product of familial (as in the case of al-Bitar), tribal (as in the case of Mahmud al-Fa‘ur of the Golan), or regional (as in the case of al-‘Ali) allegiance. *‘Iṣābāt* outfits like that of al-Qassam’s could “fit into the alliance networks situated around a leader of

interregional importance” who would aggregate such alliances into larger rebel networks such as that of Hananu and ultimately of Faysal in Damascus.¹⁵ And yet being a part of such a network did not necessarily prove support for Faysal’s authority in Damascus. Some rural insurgents resented Sharifian claims to power and the dominance of Damascus, while Faysal for his part maintained a complicated relationship with different *‘iṣābāt*, supporting some and constraining others.¹⁶

As such, unlike his movements in Palestine, this period of al-Qassam’s life is much more difficult to ascertain. Most apocryphal accounts of his year-long fight against the French come from people who were not, in fact, there. The accounts that have been given of al-Qassam in Jabal Sahyun describe a climate of intense religious practice including memorization of the Qur’an, discussions on the requirements of jihad, and a host of rituals associated with local Qadiri customs, most notably dhikr, the practice of ritual invocation.¹⁷

But al-Qassam’s time in the hills of northwest Syria was also marked by tension *within* his group: between fighters of modest background and the “several large landowners” from Jabla who had been financially supporting al-Qassam’s insurgency. As Abdallah Hanna has described, the First World War made large- and medium-scale landowners more powerful. Many saw their holdings grow, which in turn increased rural dispossession and urbanization. As the French consolidated their positions in Latakia, these landowners were pressured to abandon their aid to the rebels or face the confiscation of their property. The bickering over aims and strategies within the rebel community was, according to one source, described by al-Qassam as “*fitna*.” The class conflict within the band between those who had a great deal to lose and those who were thought to be more fully committed to the cause clearly influenced al-Qassam’s later opinion on the suitability of potential *mujahidin* when organizing his movement in Palestine.¹⁸

Between 1919 and 1921, the French faced resistance from many facets of Syrian society. Large-scale landowners saw the doubling of taxation rates, while middle-class merchants were shut out of bureaucratic employment or forced to contend with new tariff schemes. Secular Arab nationalism remained the provenance of middle-class, educated elites, but increasingly other forms of nationalist expression gained traction throughout the country.¹⁹

The insurgencies, such as the one of which al-Qassam was a part, were hardly confined to the Coastal Mountains. In fact, the authority of Amir Faysal’s Arab Kingdom of Syria extended barely beyond the limits of some of the major Syrian cities. Throughout most of the countryside, little control could

be exercised by a central authority following the defeat and occupation of the Ottoman Empire in the fall of 1918. That rebel groups fought independently against the colonial forces as they took up their positions does not, however, mean that Faysal did not command some sort of allegiance.

In June or early July 1920, al-Qassam is said to have left his mountain enclave and entered Damascus for a meeting with the amir. The meeting was ostensibly about al-Qassam receiving armed support from Faysal and had been facilitated by the amir's secretary, an old companion of al-Qassam's from his time at al-Azhar. July 1920 was a particularly chaotic time in Syria, and the French archives contain translated proclamations from the middle weeks of the month that testify to the sense of urgency that the nationalists felt: "Nous nous adressons à vous dans un moment des plus critiquez [sic] et historiques pour la Nation, pour vous parler de deux questions importantes: La Vie ou la Mort." (We come to you at one of the most critical and historic moments for the nation, to speak of the two important questions: life or death.) Another proclamation, posted to walls in Aleppo, read: "O Enfants de la Patrie, c'est à cette heure que la Patrie vous invite à vous soulever contre le danger qui menace le Pays. A LE DEFENSE! [sic] Par vos personnes et par vos biens. Gardez avant tout chose, le calme, la sagesse, la sécurité, pour prouver au Monde que nous faisons une Guerre défensive dans toute l'acceptation du mot. Salut à celui qui connait son devoir et l'exécute." (O Children of the Fatherland, it is at this hour that the Fatherland invites you to rise against the danger threatening the country. TO ITS DEFENSE! By your body and your property. Above all, keep calm, wise, and secure, to prove to the world that we are making a defensive war in every meaning of the word. Godspeed to he who knows his duty and does it.)²⁰

The experiences al-Qassam had in fighting the French influenced him greatly in his quest fifteen years later to ignite a similar uprising against the British. His difficulty in controlling *fitna* by securing class cohesion, his use of an isolated mountain base, and his framing of the insurgency in religious and nationalist terms were all issues that would surface in his Palestine campaign. Additionally, there is some symmetry between al-Qassam seeking support from Faysal and what has been written about his relationship to the Palestinian nationalist leadership in Jerusalem. Yet British Palestine was different from French Syria. Moreover, fifteen years was a long time for colonial governments to better understand and exercise control over their new territories. There is little to suggest that al-Qassam's forces had many successes against the French. But a French military tribunal did condemn him to death in absentia, giving reason to believe that his was an insurgency of at least some inconvenience.²¹



Figure 4. *The Fall of Damascus*; courtesy of the Australian War Museum.

During that period of great instability in the country, and shortly before the Battle of Maysalun that would mark the defeat of Hashemite Syria, al-Qassam and a coterie of associates slipped out of the country via Lebanon and into British-controlled northern Palestine.

■ After leaving Syria, al-Qassam first traveled south into Lebanon, where he met up with his old classmate from al-Azhar, Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Tanukhi. Al-Tanukhi was in Beirut, where he had founded al-Ifsah, an organization that encouraged the use of standardized, formal Arabic as a nationalist reaction to the “turkification” of Bilad al-Sham. Al-Tanukhi helped secure travel documents for al-Qassam and his companions for entry into Palestine. Making the crossing easier was the relative instability of the border itself: the boundary between British Palestine and French Syria was in flux, as the French were consolidating their military victories in the aftermath of the Franco-Syrian conflict that summer. In March 1920, less than a year before al-Qassam crossed from Lebanon into Palestine, one border dispute between Shi’a tribesmen from Jabal ‘Amil resulted in a battle at a Jewish colony known as Tel Hai, in which eight Jewish colonists were killed, including a

one-armed Russian war hero named Josef Trumpeldor. Tel Hai had been a part of the territory controlled initially by the British before being passed to the French in November 1919. The French, still fighting insurgencies in Latakia and other northern provinces, had woefully insufficient forces in the frontier areas of the Upper Galilee, southern Lebanon and Golan, where their authority was routinely challenged by local populations. The French were also incapable of preventing internecine conflict among local groups, and Tel Hai was but one of many violent confrontations in the border zone between the mandates.²²

The border between British Palestine and French Syria took five years (1918–1923) to formalize in part because residents of the area were unwilling to abide the colonial settlements reached in Europe, as these settlements rarely reflected the social realities on the ground. Residents of Jabal ‘Amil, for instance, had long looked south toward Haifa, not toward Beirut, as the urban convergence of their social and economic networks. As one historian notes, “the Palestinian lira circulated among ‘Amili hands more regularly than the Lebanese one did,”²³ and leather producers and shoemakers were able to more readily market their goods in Palestine. When al-Qassam crossed the border, it was in the early days of a nearly yearlong process of formal demarcation taking place under the Paulet-Newcombe Commission.²⁴

To the east, on the other northern “frontier,” much the same environment could be found. Between the summer of 1920 and the spring of 1921, the area straddling the Jordan River was described by Norman Bentwich, the British legal secretary to the military administration, as a “no man’s land.” Before the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan, the political future was uncertain and “highway robbery and village raids” were common from Bedouin tribesmen who were conducting what British police were describing as “cross-border raids” even though there was, technically, no border of which to speak. While it is assumed that al-Qassam arrived in Haifa along the coast from Lebanon, the permeable border zone in these years stretched from as far north as Tyre to as far south and east as Irbid.²⁵

Traveling with al-Qassam was one of his closest companions, Shaykh Muhammad al-Hanifi. Al-Hanifi had joined the shaykh in Jabla soon after his return from al-Azhar and fought with him against the French. There is some dispute about which of al-Qassam’s other companions made the initial escape southward with their shaykh. Shaykh ‘Ali al-Hajj ‘Ubayd most certainly made the trip, and al-Qassam’s brother Fakhr al-Din is also a likely candidate. Not with al-Qassam, though, was his wife, Amina, and their children, who remained in Jabla.

In Haifa, al-Qassam would rebuild a life and career interrupted by war. Yet the impetus that drove him to reject colonial control over what was immutable Muslim land never dissipated, and the circumstances that led him to rebel against the French in his home would be dwarfed by the politics of the British Mandate for Palestine. Al-Qassam was leaving one untenable situation for what, in the end, would become another.

Exile to Haifa

When al-Qassam arrived in Haifa, he would have found a city in a state of rapid transformation, propelled by two important processes. The first began in the mid-nineteenth century as the Ottoman bureaucracy in Istanbul started to assert a coherent and consistent administrative power over the empire's periphery. Autonomous groups of merchants and peasants in northern Palestine responded to the growing pains of integration into new commercial networks that recentered mercantile life. New networks of patrimonialism changed the fortunes of some families and left others in dire economic straits. The second process came with the arrival of the British Mandate, which saw the acceleration of industrialization and urbanization that had begun with the Tanzimat reforms. Industrial development projects in Haifa, such as the oil pipeline from Iraq and the development of the port, turned the city into Palestine's industrial center.¹

These projects were the most substantial capital investment into infrastructure developments made during the mandate, and they transformed Haifa from a town of 24,000 in 1922 to a small city of 50,000 in 1931. A confluence of factors led to the swell in Haifa's population. At the beginning of the mandate, nearly three-quarters of the population of Palestine was rural. Yet between 1919 and 1936, in parts of the countryside (in northern Palestine in particular) the demographic landscape would be remade through economic migration. In his study of migration during the mandate period, Mahmud Yazbak argues that economic forces pulled fellahin into the swelling labor force that the industrial projects in Haifa required, while also pushing them out of their villages as a result of land sales, depressed markets for agricultural products, and environmental factors such as drought. Poor harvests in

the late 1920s and early 1930s, coupled with the global depression, caused commodity prices to collapse. An already difficult existence as a subsistence farmer was made worse by these capricious international forces.²

By the time the British authorities conducted their census in the early 1920s, Haifa was the third-largest city in Palestine, though well behind Jerusalem and Jaffa. In fact, Haifa has largely been absent from the historical record for the previous millennium. It had been little more than a sleepy village of twenty houses in the sixteenth century, controlled from the inland administrative centers in al-Lajjun and Safad. Haifa experienced consistent growth throughout the middle to late Ottoman period, in particular once it was fortified in 1716 as a deterrent to customs evasion and piracy under the administrative rule of Zahir al-ʿUmar and his successor al-Jazzar Pasha.³

Abutting the northeastern slope of Mount Carmel, Haifa's lower city had a moderate climate with average rainfall and temperatures compared to those found in communities up the mountain. It likely reminded al-Qassam of Latakia, which had a similar climate and population, though Haifa was far more heterogeneous in the latter respect. The city lay at the crossroads of north-south and east-west trade routes, making it an important strategic point, but like Jabla it was secondary to a nearby commercial and administrative settlement to the north, in this case Acre. While Haifa's position as a port city developed during the mandate years, it had long served as the commercial outlet for the Marj Ibn ʿAmr valley, which ran south and westward toward Lake Tiberias. This pattern of trade and travel between hinterland and city would grow exponentially during the 1930s, when industrial development tilted the flow of capital and labor distinctly in Haifa's direction. In this environment, al-Qassam established for himself a social and professional network that would support him, his family, and ultimately his movement for the next fifteen years.⁴

■ That al-Qassam chose the Haifa area in which to settle after fleeing Syria is no surprise. Practically, Haifa was the city under British control closest to Syria—where his family initially remained. Shortly after arriving in Haifa, he was presented with an opportunity for his family to join him pending mediation with the French authorities in Beirut, but he refused to negotiate with the European occupiers who had sentenced him to die. Initially, al-Qassam lived together with his compatriots from Syria somewhere in Haifa's Old City, not far from al-Jarina Mosque. They took their meals together, as they had in the mountains of Jabal Sahyun. Unemployed, they initially relied on the charity of sympathetic Haifawis.⁵

Haifa was also home to a number of Syrians who had fled the French after

being sentenced to death as “agitators.” Many of these Syrians arrived in Haifa at around the same time as al-Qassam, while many more had already established earlier connections in the city or were originally from northern Palestine but had been in Syria as a part of King Faysal’s regime. Nevertheless, there were strong networks in Haifa from which these newly exiled or deported nationalists drew support—networks that were strengthened as more Syrian exiles arrived after 1921.⁶

At some point in 1921 or 1922, a group of Syrians who remained sympathetic to al-Qassam interceded with the French authorities to issue travel documents for Amina al-Qassam and her four children to join their father in Haifa. While the al-Qassam family initially stayed in Haifa’s Old City, they moved shortly afterward and settled in the village of Balad al-Shaykh, about four and a half miles to the southeast of the city, at the foot of Mount Carmel. The village had changed little in terms of size since it was first given as an endowment by the Ottoman sultan Salim I to an ascetic Sufi shaykh in the early sixteenth century, as the legend went. Disease, wars, famines, and natural disasters had kept the population of the village stable throughout Ottoman rule, and by the end of the First World War and al-Qassam’s arrival, about five hundred people called Balad al-Shaykh home. Originally dispersed over dunams of farmland that stretched from the side of Mount Carmel into the Marj Ibn ‘Amr, as the village grew during the mandate, houses were increasingly clustered near the wells in the center of the village, about two hundred yards south of the Haifa-Nazareth road. When al-Qassam arrived, and before the village expanded as a quasi-commuter suburb of Haifa, the arched houses were built of limestone, and many still had the traditional *tābūn* clay oven. Villagers were predominantly agrarian, farming some grains but mostly harvesting olives in the orchard that straddled the road south of the village.⁷

It is difficult to know why al-Qassam chose Balad al-Shaykh as his new home. While a shrine (*maqām mazār*) to Shaykh ‘Abdallah al-Sahli, the community’s eponym, could be found just to the north of the village, the khan that had once adjoined it was gone and, instead, the tomb stood independently. There was no grand mosque or active *zāwiya*, such as that at the Sultan Ibrahim Ibn Adham. There was an elementary school that had been built in the late nineteenth century, but al-Qassam instead looked to Haifa for employment. Yet more than a decade and a half after al-Qassam arrived in Palestine, Balad al-Shaykh remained inconveniently distant from the city to the west. When some of Haifa’s poorest residents—living in squalor in tin huts in the neighborhood of Ard al-Raml, at the estuary where al-Muqatta’ River meets Haifa Bay—were to be evacuated and relocated to Balad al-

Shaykh, they protested to the British authorities that the distance was too great to sustain their employment in Haifa.⁸

Travel between the village and the city was done via the Haifa-Nazareth road, which ran in a northwest-southeast direction and was in need of repair for much of the early mandate. Pictures from the period show a road of hard-packed dirt and gravel, wide enough to accommodate the few horse-drawn carts still in use by many of the Jewish colonies southwest of the city but wholly unsuitable for the buses, trucks, and newer motorcars sold in the country, such as those from the Dodge, Sunbeam, and Studebaker companies. The trip between Balad al-Shaykh and Haifa brought al-Qassam past sporadic factories on either side of the road. He would have passed the private Eisenberg quarry on the south side, with its stone crusher and pumping engine, and bumped over the narrow-gauge rail track that straddled the road connecting the quarry to the main rail line that ran parallel on the north side. A half mile farther was the level crossing, where the road northeast to Acre began. Farther along stood a rice mill and a tannery before the road zigged to the right and zagged to the left, passing, after 1931, the Shell bridge and bulk oil installation that became iconic of Haifa's industrialization during the interwar period. Once into the city proper, the distinctive Wadi Rush-miyya Bridge, built as a means for mostly Jewish residents of the new neighborhoods up the mountain to bypass a more circuitous route through the city, stood as a landmark to the south. Past the Ard al-Yahud neighborhood, the cigarette factory, the flour mill, and finally, the Haifa rail station. It was a four-mile trip that took al-Qassam from the village through industrial development and shantytowns to a burgeoning metropolis.⁹

■ Among the Syrian exiles, the Haifa area proved to be a natural choice for al-Qassam and his family, and he was able to leverage this familiarity into a quick ascent to the higher echelon of 'ulama' in the city. For work, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam turned to the Islamic Society (al-Jam'iyya al-Islamiyya), the representative institution of Haifa's Muslims, who controlled the *awqāf* properties, Islamic schools, and mosques in the northern city. The society had been formed less than three years before al-Qassam's arrival in order to administer the *awqāf* and Muslim institutions of learning. Unlike in Jerusalem, there were relatively few prominent religious families in Haifa, and the *awqāf* itself was small. The Murad, Khatib, and Imam families held the prominent *awqāf* positions in the city, while other notable Muslim families, including the Hajj Ibrahims, Mukhlis, and Tahas, maintained positions on the Islamic Society's board. The structure of the society's executive board, with 'ulama' from religious families mixed with notables from prominent,



Figure 5. View of Haifa from Mount Carmel, circa 1920; Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-DIG-matpc-13375].

usually merchant or landowning, families, was increasingly typical of the way British administrators conceived of Palestinian society. When the administration created the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) in December 1921, only two ‘ulama’ were elected to council seats: al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni, the mufti of Jerusalem, and Muhammad Murad, the mufti of Haifa and president of the Islamic Society. Murad had been elected to the SMC to represent the city of Haifa and the District of Acre. This confluence of religious authority and notable class interests had differing effects in various parts of Palestine, but in Haifa it produced an Islamic Society that was to be tightly interwoven with the politics of the city.¹⁰

Initially, many of Haifa’s notable families were haltingly supportive of the British administration, expressing Palestinians’ hope that the British occupation would be a productive, albeit short-lived, one. That sentiment was particularly true of the old cadre of religious leaders in the city, such as Shaykh Yunis al-Khatib, who had enriched himself as a religious officeholder under the Ottomans, and Muslim merchants such as al-Hajj Khalil Taha. Many from the mercantile elite saw the British arrival as an opportunity to institutionalize some advantages for their families. However, in short course, the Islamic Society assumed a leading role in voicing the political

discontent felt by Haifa's Muslims, and increasingly a split developed between the nationalists who ran the Islamic Society and those they had—at least temporarily—displaced from power in the city. This latter group turned to other associations to assert their social and economic authority, such as Hasan Shukri's Islamic Patriotic Society, which cooperated with Zionists to extend their control over certain levers of power such as the municipal council. This split coincided with the first outbreak of significant, mass violence in the British Mandate for Palestine, which took place in Jaffa in May 1921.¹¹

The Jaffa Riots, as they became known, presaged many of the coming conflicts of the 1920s. What began as an internecine conflict between Jewish socialist organizations through the spreading of rumors led to violent clashes in which many Jews and Palestinians in the city were killed. In response to the disturbances, the Haifa Islamic Society released its "Statement to the Civilized World" ("Bayan ila al-'alam al-mutamadan"), in which it warned of the threat of "Jewish Bolshevism," in reference to the Jewish socialist organizations whose violence sparked the riots. Further, it criticized the government's violent suppression of unarmed Palestinian protestors. That violence was largely confined to Jaffa and some surrounding towns.¹²

Shortly before the riots in Jaffa, al-Qassam's name appeared, alongside those of other prominent northern 'ulama', on a letter sent from the Islamic Society to the British high commissioner in support of the appointment of Amin al-Husayni to the position of grand mufti of Jerusalem. The list of signatories included the mufti of Haifa, Muhammad Murad; the former mayor (and anti-Zionist) 'Abd al-Rahman al-Hajj; and Yunis al-Khatib, who would soon become an avowed opponent of the mufti. Thus, al-Qassam's entrée into the Haifa Islamic Society appears to have been quick. His initial connection to the organization was through al-Hajj Amin Nur Allah, to whom al-Qassam may have been related. The Nur Allahs were an important and notable family in Jabla, and a branch of the family immigrated to Haifa in the 1870s, so it is not unlikely that al-Qassam and Hajj Amin Nur Allah had some sort of familial connection. Ottoman archival documents show that Mustafa Nur Allah Effendi was a member of Jabla's Municipal Council at the same time that 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam worked for its education commission. Under the Ottoman rulers of Haifa, the Nur Allahs had been minor notables, holding the office of registrar of the usufruct of state lands. Members of the family's Haifa branch would remain active politically throughout the mandate years, and al-Qassam developed a relationship with another Nur Allah, 'Atif, who would lead a local nationalist scout troop closely associated with al-Qassam's circles.¹³

The Islamic Society continued its advocacy on behalf of Haifawis. Six

months after the Jaffa Riots, the Islamic Society coauthored a joint letter with the leaders of Haifa's Christian community to the British Parliament denouncing the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Three years later, the Society was again advocating for a cause, this time beseeching the Municipal Council to stop work to erect electrical poles in Haifa in protest of the Palestine government's awarding of the electrical concession to Pinhas Rutenberg's Jaffa Electric Company Ltd. This issue remained important to the Islamic Society, and in 1924 members came together to again petition the president of the Municipal Council. They wanted the British authorities to know that they were prepared to form a national company to electrify Palestine and that the concession to Rutenberg should be rescinded. The Society argued that Palestinians were the natural rights holders of such national projects.¹⁴

Besides its activism, the Society had one main function: to administer the city's *awqāf* properties and their attendant institutions. In Haifa the central mosque under the Society's purview was al-Jarina, known colloquially as masjid al-Kabir (typically "the Great Mosque," but in this case more aptly the "big mosque" in distinction from the "small mosque" about two hundred yards to the south). Al-Jarina was founded by Zahir al-'Umar, the autonomous ruler of northern Palestine in the eighteenth century. When it was built, the mosque overlooked the sea, but over the last decades of the Ottoman Empire the lower town expanded exponentially until, during the mandate, the construction of the port and the commercial buildings along the adjacent thoroughfare known as the Kingsway reshaped the neighborhood entirely. Al-Qassam was initially employed at al-Jarina as one of the mosque's preachers, delivering sermons and counseling worshippers. But as he had in the past, al-Qassam took up the other professional practice commonly associated with the 'ulama': he once again became a teacher in the local Islamic school.¹⁵

■ In 1921 al-Qassam went to work at al-Burj Islamic School, another institution under the Islamic Society's supervision, in the area of the city from which the school took its name. Al-Burj was a pocket of a neighborhood, sandwiched between the areas known as Wadi Salib, Wadi Nisnas, and Haifa's downtown. Getting to the school, al-Qassam would walk northwest along Stanton Street, named for Colonel Stanton, the military governor of Haifa from 1919 to 1922. From Stanton Street he would turn sharply left and walk the three hundred steps up the Irbil stone stairway, emerging at the top onto al-Burj Street opposite the school. The intersection on which the Islamic school stood was a main thoroughfare between the downtown and the Jewish enclave of Hadar HaCarmel. Later in the decade, the Hever no. 6

bus ascended and descended the hill on a regular route, only interrupted in the late 1930s first by road construction (the mandate authorities sought to widen the street in front of the school to make the less-than-ninety-degree turn onto Shappiro or Hasan Shukri street safer), then by the concerted Palestinian grenade and rifle assaults on Jewish transportation in Haifa.¹⁶

Like most Islamic schools, al-Burj was funded by the waqf and had both a boys' and a girls' school. Al-Qassam was initially employed in the girls' school but took over duties in the boys' school within a year. As a teacher, al-Qassam seems to have been widely respected by students but not the administrators. A number of accounts of al-Qassam's time at the school continue to circulate, showing him to have been demanding and strict, enforcing codes of good behavior and adherence to the basic tenets of Islam. He is reported to have struck an adult student who had come to class drunk. Despite being a smoker himself, he banned smoking during his lessons.¹⁷

He also made little effort to conceal his political leanings. "What do you want to do with your future?" he is reported to have asked his class one day. When a student responded that he wished to become a "leader of the Muslims, and work in the cause of God and country" (*fi sabilillāh wa-l-waṭan*), al-Qassam responded with great enthusiasm. Al-Qassam may not have been subtle on this point, and it is easy to imagine that this student was perceptive and responded to the teacher's harmless inquiry with what he thought his teacher might like to hear. However, another story repeated about his time as a teacher leaves little doubt about al-Qassam's open opposition to Zionism and the British. When a lecture devolved into a discussion of the British Mandate and Jewish migration to Palestine, one student asked how al-Qassam, a simple teacher at a boys' elementary school, would solve the problems plaguing the country. "With this," he replied, producing a pistol from under his jacket.¹⁸

One student remembers al-Qassam leading the school in a commemoration of the triumphs of Saladin over the Crusaders and, in particular, the 1187 Battle of Hattin, which took place to the west of Haifa. The students reenacted the Battle of Hattin with a particular emphasis on the Islamic character of Saladin. The obvious parallels between the Islamic reconquest of Palestine from the Western, Christian crusaders were surely not lost on the students, and al-Qassam was able to turn the reenactment into an annual affair throughout his tenure at the school. Later, in 1929, the celebration, which al-Qassam played a leading role in starting, was turned into an explicit nationalist rally.¹⁹

In 1924, a fellow Syrian arrived in Haifa and took over the administration of al-Burj Islamic School. Kamil al-Qassab's hiring marked a change in

circumstance for al-Qassam in particular. On the one hand, it would cost al-Qassam his job as a teacher at the school. Al-Qassab had significant experience as an educator and school administrator and made demands on al-Qassam's time that the latter was not able to meet. On the other hand, al-Qassab and al-Qassam had a great deal in common, and after the initial friction over al-Qassam's teaching, the two forged a fruitful and long-lasting alliance.

■ Kamil al-Qassab was born in Damascus in 1873 and studied at al-Azhar a few years before al-Qassam. After completing his studies and returning to Bilad al-Sham, he established what became known as the Kamiliyya School in al-Buzuriyya district, a short distance from the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus. The school was a center for nationalist politics, producing a number of Syria's future nationalist leaders from among its students and teachers, including 'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar and Khayr al-Din al-Zirkili. During the war he had joined al-Fatat, an underground Arab nationalist group, and was initially close to King Faysal. Al-Qassab was an important figure during Faysal's short reign, and he maintained close connections with key military figures such as Rushdi al-Safadi, divisional commander of the Arab army in Aleppo. His association with the Hashemite king did not last long, however, and soon he drifted away from Faysal and into the orbit of the Arabian monarch 'Abd al-Aziz al-Sa'ud.²⁰

According to French military archives, by early 1920 al-Qassab had been sentenced to death by a French military court, but like so many before him, he slipped out of Syria and into exile. Initially he went to the Najd and joined the Saudi administration as director of education, but his health worsened in the desert climate and he left for Haifa. Between his experience as an administrator at the Kamiliyya as director of education for Ibn Sa'ud, his reputation as a nationalist agitator against the French in Syria, and the political connections he had in Haifa through al-Fatat, he was welcomed by the Haifa Islamic Society, which was likely eager to have him take over the city's Islamic schools.²¹

Al-Qassam left al-Burj Islamic School in 1924. Whether it was a dismissal or a resignation, the reasons behind the decision are unclear. That it was precipitated by al-Qassab's arrival is certain, and three possible explanations have emerged: Some suspect it was a case of al-Qassab criticizing al-Qassam's limited time commitment to the school and the former's "strict managerial style."²² Al-Qassam was devoting a great deal of effort to his work as *khaṭīb* at al-Jarina and tending to its rapidly growing congregation, a priority that seems to have bothered al-Qassab. Others, however, report that

it was a dispute over curriculum that led to the split. As Abdul Latif Tibawi notes, curriculum was an exceptionally contentious issue in the mid-1920s. While this was especially true of state schools, there likely was pressure to bring certain aspects of al-Burj's curriculum closer to that of state schools.²³ Lastly, al-Qassab was known as a difficult person and strict teacher, prone to corporal punishment. There are reports that al-Qassab's use of physical force in the classroom may have been beyond the norm for the period and in the case of the Kamiliyya, directly resulted in an exodus of students and teachers.²⁴

What seems most likely is that the dispute between al-Qassab and al-Qassam was practical and not doctrinaire. The school under al-Qassab became a center of Salafi activity, and shortly after al-Qassab's arrival, the two Salafi 'ulama' joined forces against some Palestinian colleagues who had grown weary of the trend's influence in the north.

■ Al-Qassam and al-Qassab's collaboration in 1925 produced the only set of texts written or compiled by al-Qassam, providing an invaluable window into both his worldview and some of the politics among the 'ulama' of Palestine in the 1920s. The larger controversy exposed deep schisms: between the practice of Islam in the towns and cities of Palestine and the ideas put forward by Salafis, and between 'ulama' from established Palestinian religious families and 'ulama' from other parts of Bilad al-Sham who were increasingly taking up the positions and posts controlled by those more established families.²⁵

Al-Qassam was the first to receive the question that initiated the controversy. It was deceptively straightforward: "What do the scholars say on the practice of *taḥlīl* [saying '*lā illāha illā Allāh*'—'there is no god but God'] and *takbīr* [saying '*Allāhu akbar*'—'God is great'] at funerals? Please advise us." In response, al-Qassam issued a fatwa in which he labelled these practices *bid'ā*—innovations: a technical point of law, but in practice an epithet deployed by Salafis against practices that they argue to be inauthentic and un-Islamic.²⁶

On May 14, 1925, the Haifa newspaper *al-Yarmuk* published a letter it received from some local 'ulama' who accused al-Qassam of sowing dissension among the city's faithful. The author(s) wrote that al-Qassam was "clinging to the peel, while leaving the pulp" of religion, and that he was "wasting debilitating time for the nation." While al-Qassam was popular among the masses of Muslims who attended his Friday sermons in al-Jarina Mosque, it seems clear that he was not popular with all of his fellow scholars. This was especially true of some local Haifawi 'ulama' who were particularly alarmed

when al-Qassam denounced the followers of the Bahai sect after the death of their leader, 'Abd al-Baha, in Haifa in November 1921. Al-Qassam had only arrived in the city the previous year, yet the émigré cleric was attacking 'Abd al-Baha, who had recently been knighted by the British for his humanitarian works in Haifa during the war. Local 'ulama' had expressed further discontent when al-Qassam began implementing changes to some of the local customs at the mosque. He was replaced briefly but soon returned after public outcry. Al-Qassab, for his part, had long been the subject of "scholarly polemics" against both a perceived lack of depth and what Bashir Nafi described as "conspiratorial theories" related to al-Qassab's associations with the House of Sa'ud and British designs on the Middle East. In their adopted city, the two Syrian 'ulama' faced long knives from some of their colleagues.²⁷

When al-Qassam sent a reply to *al-Yarmuk*, he was rebuffed by the editor of the paper, so he turned instead to the Christian-operated biweekly *al-Karmil*. Three weeks later his withering reply, in which he wrote that "*bid'a* both small and large are the greatest damage done to the *umma*," was printed. He targeted "profiteering circles, whose perpetuation of ignorance was becoming a source of living." Personal corruption bled into nationalist politics: the early volleys between the camps had been fired. Soon, al-Qassab received a similar query and produced a similar response to al-Qassam. Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Jazzar, the shari'a court judge of Acre, wrote a retort to al-Qassab along the same lines as the *al-Yarmuk* letter. Al-Qassab and al-Qassam found themselves on the same side in an expanding conflict between traditionalist Palestinian 'ulama' and the newly arrived Syrian Salafis.²⁸

The al-Qassab and the al-Jazzar texts were then sent to reformist 'ulama' at al-Azhar: Shaykh Mahmud Khattab and Shaykh 'Ali Surur al-Zinkaluni, the latter a longtime associate of Muhammad 'Abduh's. The Cairene shaykhs upheld al-Qassab's (and by implication al-Qassam's) *fatāwā* but were in turn criticized by Muhammad Subhi al-Khuzayran, an Azhari and associate of al-Jazzar's who wrote a treatise titled *Fasl al-Khitab* (Decisive Discourse) in response to al-Zinkaluni, al-Qassab, and al-Qassam. Al-Khuzayran was a traditionalist *ālim* appointed by the Ottomans to give lessons at the Jazzar Mosque and Ahmadiyya College in Acre, before being appointed *qāḍī* in Haifa. His response was biting: "I call the attention of His Eminence, Head of the Supreme Muslim Council in Jerusalem . . . and his virtuous men of his council, especially shaykh Muhammad Effendi Murad, Mufti of the city of Haifa . . . to the careers of these two scholars [al-Qassam and al-Qassab]." He appealed to the SMC "to deter them and prevent them from completing its spread . . . preventing the seeds of corruption, and what will bring sedition and discord among people."²⁹

This appeal to al-Husayni and Murad is curious. Both seemed to have favored al-Qassam in his four years since arriving in Haifa, and even though he had been removed from his position at the mosque, his absence had been brief. Instead, al-Khuzayran's appeal may have been an oblique warning to the British authorities about the dangers that Salafists in general, and these Salafists in particular, posed to the public order of the mandate.

The debate culminated with al-Qassam and al-Qassab printing a pamphlet titled *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan fi Dafʿa Awham Khuziran* (The Critique and Declaration in Refutation of Khuzayran's Illusions) marshaling *fatāwā* from prominent 'ulama' of past and present against their opposition. In it, al-Qassab drew on a hadith, recounting that the Prophet Muhammad told boisterous early Muslims, "O people, calm yourselves. You are not calling to the deaf or absent," before offering a less than subtle jab toward the traditional Palestinian 'ulama'. He quoted another hadith attributed to the prophet: "If innovations [*bidʿa*, here meaning the practices in question] took place in my nation and my friends were cursed, the 'ālim should show his knowledge. If he does not, he too would be cursed by God, the angels [*al-malā'ika*] and all the people."³⁰

Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan deals not only with *tahlīl* and *takbīr*, but also with other practices considered *bidʿa*, including the visitation of shrines and the intermixing of sexes. Regardless of the motives some of the Palestinian 'ulama' may have had in raising their critique of al-Qassam and al-Qassab, these were fault lines in the contest between modernist reformers of the Salafi persuasion and traditional 'ulama' who appeared more willing to accept popular interpretations of religious practice. Despite (or because of) these tensions between the traditionalist and reform camps, al-Qassam's popularity as a preacher did not suffer. Attendance at his sermons grew over the course of the 1920s, and in the midst of the *tahlīl* controversy, al-Qassam was presented with a new opportunity to expand his influence.

■ Al-Qassam's mosque, al-Jarina, was a low-slung building in the docklands at the foot of the city's highest structure, the six-story 'Abd al-Hamid clock tower. It was frequented by mostly young men of rural origin who had become stevedores or casual laborers after migrating to the city. The expansion of the port in the mid-1920s drew more workers, which in turn drew more eyes and ears to al-Qassam's Friday sermons. With the increasing population in Haifa's lower town and adjacent neighborhoods of Wadi Salib and Wadi Nisnas, and the popular following that preachers such as al-Qassam were gaining among Haifawis, al-Jarina and the "small" mosques were no longer big enough to accommodate attendees at Friday prayers, holidays,



Figure 6. Al-Istiqlal Mosque, circa 1929; photo © Andrusier/Bridgeman Images.

and Ramadan. A new mosque was proposed as a solution, and construction began in 1924 on masjid al-Istiqlal.³¹

Al-Istiqlal (“Independence”) takes its name from the fact that its funding came not from the nation’s *awqāf* administrators at the Supreme Muslim Council in Jerusalem but from private donations raised locally. Its construction highlighted an old local animosity on the part of the city’s Muslim merchant class toward their equals in Jerusalem, who, with powers acceded to them by the British government, continued to exercise authority wherever they could over the northern city. But added to these regional resentments was the new dimension of nationalist politics: some members of *a’yān* families in Haifa did not share the nationalist political persuasion of the Supreme Muslim Council and its proxies in Haifa.³²

Ibrahim al-Khalil, a merchant and a member of the Islamic Society, initiated the construction in 1924. He was interested in building a complex that featured both commercial space and an important mosque. The plot of land allocated to the project was (and remains) adjacent to the city’s Muslim cemetery on the southeast edge of town, about one-third of a mile from al-Jarina. To the east of the site lies the Haifa Bay and the area of the port and the railyards. If the hopes for the name were ambitious, the plans for the project itself matched them. The footprint for the proposed building took up two blocks and would include the mosque, with its steps pointing north toward the downtown, and commercial space along the west, south, and east façades.³³

While the provenance of the name is certainly plausible, the construction of the mosque required more than tacit consent from Jerusalem. Muhammad Murad, the mufti of Haifa, who was also a close associate of al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni and a member of the Supreme Muslim Council, was partly responsible for securing the funding for the project's construction and the maintenance of the property. This connection alone is a reminder that little could be done in terms of the institutions of Islam without the long arms of the SMC somehow involved. And yet, if the meaning of al-Istiqlal in this case really was an assertion of independence from Jerusalem as much as could be expected, the decision to hire 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam as the new mosque's imam was an interesting one.³⁴

In 1925, al-Qassam was appointed to be al-Istiqlal's imam and *khaṭīb* in the midst of the *tahlīl* and *takbīr* controversy and, it would seem, against the wishes of some powerful 'ulama' in northern Palestine. On the surface, it seems that this was a coup on al-Qassam's part. Yet at the time it may not have been seen as such by many of Haifa's ruling religious class. The new mosque, for all the celebrations of its symbolism in the city's contest against Jerusalem's oversight, was sandwiched between the slums creeping up the side of Mount Carmel on one side and the industrial zone of the Haifa Bay on the other. The mosque lacked the prestige of al-Jarina, and its congregants were of a tougher class. The neighborhoods adjacent to it lacked the infrastructure that was found closer to the lower city. It was a new mosque, built in many ways for *new* Haifawis: Palestinian economic migrants from the countryside, Haurani and Egyptian stevedores, and, maybe, Syrian 'ulama'.

Al-Qassam likely did not read his appointment this way. In fact, if Haifa's traditionalist scholars had thought al-Qassam would be isolated in al-Istiqlal among the city's poor and working class, that strategy backfired in consequential ways. Al-Qassam was a "thundering" or "sonorous" (*jahūwarī*) preacher and attracted a following from the slums of Wadi Salib.³⁵ His reputation as a Syrian exile with a French death warrant likely contributed to the esteem in which he was held by the young men increasingly frustrated by difficult economic constraints. The proximity and size of the mosque meant an even greater reach for al-Qassam's message, and he seized this opportunity, delivering speeches warning of the consequences of personal laziness and negligence. Al-Qassam made it clear in his sermons, not to mention his lessons in class at al-Burj and ultimately in gatherings among his circles of followers, that political change necessitated individual change as well.³⁶

While teaching in al-Burj school and preaching at al-Jarina had allowed al-Qassam to make an impact on Haifa's Muslims in the short time since his arrival, it was really the imamate of al-Istiqlal that provided him with a sig-

nificant platform to reach a greater audience. Over the course of the British Mandate, thanks largely to al-Qassam's efforts, the mosque became one of the more important centers of nationalist political and religious activities in Palestine between its construction and the Nakba in 1948.³⁷

From the pulpit at al-Istiqlal, al-Qassam preached to an alienated working class, advocating self-help and empowerment in the face of economic exploitation, and steadfastness in the face of colonial oppression. In less than a decade, those sermons would be transformed into the fuel of revolution.

Workers and Villagers

On the surface, al-Qassam's arrival in Haifa seems to have marked for him a new beginning. There he found admirers from among the poor, the middle class, and even the city's elite. Eking out his and his family's own lower-middle-class existence, he found employment in his chosen professions. Even with the *tahlīl* and *takbīr* controversy, he maintained the support of a community of like-minded scholars both in Haifa and in neighboring countries. Yet the politics of Palestine were inescapable for a man who had spent his entire adult life engaged in the issues of the day.

The 1920s witnessed the acceleration of the British colonial project in Palestine and the Jewish National Home policy that project enabled. Haifa's social, economic, and demographic changes brought Arab Palestinians into closer contact with increasing numbers of Jewish immigrants from Europe. As Palestinian economic conditions worsened, resistance to both colonial communities followed in the form of a dynamic and multifaceted political movement. Against the common historiography of the period, the economic changes in particular brought the Islamic resistance of Salafi preachers, secular nationalists, and committed communists into cooperation. The Palestinian labor movement expanded and consolidated. New heterogeneous associations and political parties were formed, all with the implicit or explicit goal of freedom and self-determination for the Palestinian people.

■ The 1920s were, in some ways, the liminal decade of the mandate: the depth of Britain's commitment to the Jewish National Home policy at the expense of Palestinian self-determination or representative government had yet to fully be known. The colonial government still received petitions from the Palestinian notables they considered representative of the community;

it promised some movement toward their demands but always fell short of granting the autonomy other Arab countries were starting to receive.

Of course, the Zionist project and Britain's professed obligation to the Jewish National Home policy outlined in the 1917 Balfour Declaration was the central, vexing political issue for the mandate authority. Haifa itself, with the completion of the port, became the primary landing center for Jewish immigrants from Europe. Jewish immigration and land sales were the most visible manifestations of the Zionist enterprise, and by 1929 they were the focus of Palestinian Arab political efforts.

Over the decade and a half of al-Qassam's time in Palestine, the Jewish population had increased from 57,000 in 1919 to 320,000 in 1935. The annual rate of Jewish immigration also increased in the early years of the 1930s as fascists in Europe took power. Not including illegal arrivals, 30,000 Jewish immigrants were admitted in 1933; 60,000 in 1935.¹

By 1929, land sales and peasant dispossession were proving particularly troublesome for the Palestinian leadership already appealing to the British for movement toward self-determination and for constraints on immigration. Jewish landownership had doubled since 1919 from 645,000 dunams to 1.3 million dunams in 1935. Worse still was the sale of land by large landlords (absentee and not) to Arab speculators. Though relatively small in scale, land sales and Jewish settlement held outsized symbolic importance for how Palestinians measured their lack of power. Despite some outcry in the Arabic press in the 1920s, the issue of landlessness only became a matter of public policy concern for the British Mandate following the 1929 Wailing Wall/al-Buraq riots. By the time al-Qassam took to the hills, a fifth of Palestinians, a traditionally agrarian society, had been rendered landless.²

During this period, Palestine's traditional leadership—comprising mostly select individuals from an even more select group of families—cooperated with the British authorities while continuously pleading their case for national self-determination and the end of the mandate. These pleas went nowhere largely because the British had no intention of granting such concessions. Instead, using methods they employed with success in other colonies, the British exacerbated divisions among Palestine's notables and coopted many of its leaders into positions that depended on the mandate's largesse. The most famous case was the creation in 1921 of the Supreme Muslim Council (al-Majlis al-Islami al-A'la, the SMC) and the installation of al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni as the grand mufti of Jerusalem. The Husaynis had held positions of importance in Jerusalem under the Ottomans for hundreds of years, including seats in the Ottoman parliament, the city's mayoralty, and its muftiship. This latter role had a more limited function during Ottoman rule but

was inflated and reconceptualized by the British. The SMC, under the supervision of the mufti, was an entirely new communal institution invested with both state legitimacy and revenue with which to build networks of patronage and support. The partisans led by the mufti and centered on the SMC became known as the *majlisi* faction, while their opponents, the *mu'araḍa* (the opposition), were led by another notable family, the Nashashibis.³

This factionalism, though significant, remains a potent theme in the way the mandate has been described. But this focus on factionalism in the histories of the mandate has, on one hand, overshadowed important aspects of colonial rule, including the role the British played in exacerbating these tensions; on the other hand, it has simplified other dynamics within Palestinian society, in particular generational and geographic divisions. Like other societies emerging from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire following the war, Palestinians were debating, negotiating, and conceptualizing their society as a political unit, and Palestinian nationalism was a multifaceted phenomenon. The overused analytical frame of “two competing notable families” does not adequately capture the complexity of Palestinian politics.⁴

Taken as a unit, a number of notable families were seen by both the British and many Palestinians—though as we shall see, far from all—as the natural representatives of Palestinian society in its dealing with the mandate authority. The most prominent members among them had held important Ottoman posts, had served in the Ottoman military, or had been trained in its prestigious schools for the civil service. Between 1917 and 1936, these representatives opted to, in the words of Rashid Khalidi, “beseech, petition and beg the British to give them what they considered their natural heritage.”⁵

The inertia of the 1920s gave life in the 1930s to new forms of mass mobilization among Palestinians whose social welfare was linked more to the world economy and changes to the labor force brought about by Jewish immigration than to more traditional social networks. Further, the traditional Palestinian leadership was particularly insular in a way that kept them largely detached from the happenings outside their base of Jerusalem and the smaller cities of central Palestine.

With the center of nationalist politics firmly entrenched in Jerusalem, smaller cities such as Haifa and Nablus were able to develop a nationalist culture distinct from the center. Haifa was a particularly vibrant community that encouraged the development of a populist, nationalist political discourse based on Islam, a strong connection to a greater Syria, and an intense encounter with the manifestations of Zionism that displaced villagers and threatened the livelihoods of Arab Haifawis.

■ In late spring 1925, young men who had attended al-Qassam's lectures at al-Istiqlal approached him with their story: Jews had been arriving in Palestine through the port at Haifa at a worrying rate, and the British authorities seemed indifferent to the consequences that their arrival held for Palestine's workers. While some of the young men were stevedores, most were skilled workers and mechanics in the railroad workshop that was located across the square, behind al-Istiqlal Mosque. The workshop had a history of labor activism, being the locus of the first union organization in Palestine in December 1919. While some of these young men had likely joined this early organization (reorganized in 1920 into the Union of Railway, Postal, and Telegraph Workers when it came under the umbrella of the Jewish Labor Federation—the Histadrut), many had not, and they complained of a systematic bias from the British authorities toward the Jewish workers and against Arab labor organizations. While Jewish labor organizations had sought, in varying degrees of sincerity, to incorporate Palestinians into their organizations, thereby creating “truly” socialist organizations, many Palestinian workers were wary of—or outright hostile to—Jewish intentions. In response to these tensions, some of the Palestinian workers in the railroad shop had formed “brotherly committees” a couple of years earlier, as a mechanism through which workers could provide mutual aid to families of injured or sick colleagues. This society, in the words of one historian, became “the nucleus for the establishment of other associations,” and it was from among this group that the leadership of the Palestinian labor movement in Haifa would emerge.⁶

Al-Qassam encouraged the work done by these committees and called for a boycott of Palestinian cooperation with the Histadrut. Drawing on a notable hadith, he is quoted as saying, “The hand of God is with the community [*jamaʿa*],” arguing that the workers should unite in the face of repression from officials. Al-Qassam suggested to the administrative board of the committees to pursue legitimacy by registering their association through the administrative laws the British had inherited from the Ottomans. Al-Qassam argued that registration would increase the association's profile and advance its agenda, and he recruited Mahmud al-Madi, a lawyer employed at the shariʿa court and member of the powerful nationalist al-Madi family of Ijzim, to file the papers on the association's behalf. This involved filing the appropriate forms with the district commissioner's office in Haifa. These forms, based on article 6 of the Ottoman Law of Societies, required applicants to provide the name of the society; its address and headquarters; the explicit “aim”; and the names, addresses, qualifications, and positions of the responsible directors.⁷

Al-Qassam's involvement with labor activism may in fact date from a few years earlier, when a Palestinian labor union was first being discussed by workers in Haifa. After he arrived in Haifa, he became acquainted with 'Abd al-Hamid Haymur, a fellow Syrian expat. Haymur, a boilermaker by trade, along with his brother 'Id Salim Haymur, worked for the Palestine Railways. The Haymurs were respected by their peers and led the initial organizing meetings. They were involved in the Brotherly Committees, and 'Abd al-Hamid developed a friendship with al-Qassam, urging members of the committee to attend al-Qassam's lectures and become followers of the shaykh, while al-Qassam, for his part, supported Haymur in his initial labor activism. It is likely that Haymur was the one who brought the workers to the mosque in the spring of 1925 to meet with al-Qassam.⁸

With al-Madi's help, the group led by Haymur registered the Jam'iyat al-'Ummal al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya, the Palestine Arab Workers Society (PAWS), with the government in the summer of 1925. PAWS put forward a plan, calling for access of the Palestinian worker to "all that is morally, socially, economically good for them"; defense of their interests; legislative protection for the worker against the whims of employers, which included the capping of work days and minimum wages; and finally, as was the case with all associations' constitutions under this law, the explicit avoidance of political activity. The approval of the society faced administrative delays the Palestinians suspected were caused at the behest of the Histadrut. There was reason for the Histadrut to view PAWS as a rival force. While its membership was initially limited to the Arab railway workers of Haifa, historian Zachary Lockman has argued that "its new name and its program indicated its ambition to make of itself the Arab counterpart of the Histadrut, an organization which would eventually encompass all the Arab workers in Palestine and seek to advance their interests."⁹

While the Palestinians thought it was the Histadrut who had influenced the delay in their union approval, the British authorities were open about their suspicion that Palestinian labor organizations were fronts for political bodies. At a Mandates Commission meeting in Geneva in 1927, George Symes—the former district commissioner in Haifa who had been elevated to the position of chief secretary for Palestine—explained the position of the government of Palestine toward Arab trade unions: "The unions were not," he said, "only unions of workers." In the opinion of the government of Palestine, Arab unions "consisted in many cases of a mosaic of all classes, and there was reason to believe that much of the movement had a political trend." It was for this reason, Symes argued, that given the circumstances of

the political climate in the mandate, “the Government had to deal cautiously with unions of this kind.”¹⁰

After the approval of the registration, Haymur and some of his associates traveled to Balad al-Shaykh. In al-Qassam’s home, they informed him that the society had been approved and asked for his “blessing” by writing a statement (*bayān*) announcing the society’s formation. This, Haymur told al-Qassam, they would “send to the press, departments, agencies, and concerned institutions.” The next day al-Qassam handed Haymur the statement. That Friday, in al-Istiqlal Mosque, al-Qassam delivered a sermon that “called on workers to join the society and support it in the face of unjust laws against Arab workers.” Al-Qassam “renewed his warning to the Arab workers against the machinations of the General Assembly of Jewish Workers (Histadrut), which were calling for Arab workers to join their membership for improved living conditions and job security.”¹¹

The formation of PAWS in 1925 was a significant moment for the development of a labor movement in Palestine. Additionally, as Symes suspected, it was a significant political act. When the group of railway workers approached al-Qassam to request his help in forming PAWS, it was done with a backdrop of the growing contest between Palestinian and Jewish workers, not solely between employers and employees. It seems, considering the deteriorating relations between Palestinian and Jewish railway workers within the context of the larger conflict, the establishment of PAWS was probably inevitable. But the agency of Palestinians in opting to form their own labor union distinct from their Jewish counterparts should be considered from the political as well as the labor perspective. This is where the presence of al-Qassam, and later associates of the shaykh such as Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim (to whom PAWS turned in the 1935 Mabruk cigarette factory strike), comes into play. In this case al-Qassam likely saw in the organization of PAWS an opportunity to facilitate a political community that would express some of the core values he preached — namely the rights of Palestinians to self-determination in the face of colonialism. That it would take the form of labor discourse was less important.¹²

Al-Qassam seems to have paid little heed to the ideological discrepancies between his form of politicized Islam and the politics of Palestinian labor that included committed Marxists and Communists. Al-Qassam worked with men such as Haymur, with whom he shared both a background and a political outlook. But he is also reported to have worked with the likes of Najati Sidqi, a leading member of the Palestine Communist Party with close connections to the Soviet Union. In his memoirs, Sidqi described being in

secret contact (*khafia*) with al-Qassam while Sidqi was working with workers groups in Haifa.¹³

Al-Qassam's involvement in the organization of the most important Palestinian labor organization during the British Mandate should not be overstated. In fact, his involvement tells us more about al-Qassam than about PAWS. What it shows is al-Qassam's willingness to help his congregants when they came to him with a problem. This is an important point that counters a great deal of the existing histories of this period, which often segregates "Islamic" resistance from political movements or individuals who took cues from, or were directly involved in, communism or even labor activism more broadly. Al-Qassam's involvement with the rail shop workers and in the formation of PAWS, and, later in the decade, his Young Men's Muslim Association's involvement in other labor matters, counters this reductionist tendency by showing "Islamic" and labor resistance efforts to have been often inextricable. At its root, al-Qassam's involvement in the formation of PAWS further shows a commitment to the improvement of the general welfare of Palestinians. A stronger Palestinian society, one where Palestinians helped Palestinians in the face of political and economic threats, would inevitably make a stronger case for independence.¹⁴

■ As much as al-Qassam was known for his preaching, leaving his teacher's salary at al-Burj school in 1924 could not have been helpful. His friend, the manager of the Arab Bank in Haifa Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, suggests that al-Qassam had a difficult time making ends meet.¹⁵ As a result, al-Qassam applied for, and was given, the job of *madhūn aqd al-ankaha*, the roving marriage registrar for the Haifa shari'a court in 1928. The role of *madhūn* required al-Qassam to travel from village to village in the district, attending important communal festivities, often in the company of his own children. This was an important development for al-Qassam for a number of reasons, one of which is that as an employee of the shari'a court, he was ultimately under the supervision of the Supreme Muslim Council in Jerusalem. Many of al-Qassam's biographers have considered this an important period, when al-Qassam became acquainted with pious villagers who would later become followers. But there were equally prosaic reasons for this decision. First, as al-Hajj Ibrahim notes, his job as imam at al-Istiqlal Mosque did not "meet his expenses." As a *khaṭīb*, al-Qassam may have made as little as eighteen pounds a year, less than many of the laborers who attended his lectures. He had a growing family and needed the money. Beyond being an employee of the waqf, conducting marriage ceremonies, on average, earned the *madhūn* about one percent of the originally negotiated bride price and custom-

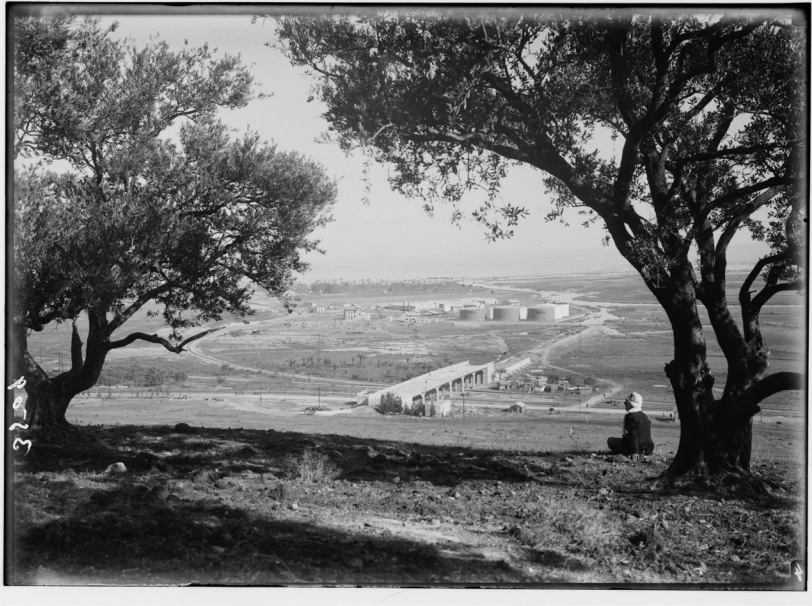


Figure 7. Shell Bridge and the Haifa-Nazareth road south of Haifa, circa 1930; Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-DIG-matpc-02817].

arily brought supplementary honorariums. While this was not a particularly lucrative endeavor in the villages of northern Palestine, al-Qassam likely saw this job as part of a greater sense of duty toward the *umma*. His role as a *ma-dhūn* can thus be seen within the continuum of his teaching and as performing a requirement on him as an *‘ālim*. In this position, he was required to teach and reinforce orthodox concepts of an Islamic marriage, and this role gave him an opportunity to deliver those concepts through a particularly Salafist lens.¹⁶

In applying for this role, al-Qassam was required to fill out a questionnaire that ostensibly tested his expertise in Islamic laws as they pertained to marriage. Yet beyond testing al-Qassam’s knowledge of orthodox marriage norms, the questionnaire’s four short questions give us some insight into what issues al-Qassam likely faced in the agrarian villages of Palestine: issues that may have been put to him by villagers curious about certain proscriptions. Marriage laws were a common point of contention among *‘ulama’*, particularly those of the Salafist persuasion on one hand and the populations who practiced customary laws (*‘urf*) or followed the more general “common practices” (*‘ādāt*) of the region on the other. These questions required al-Qassam to consider the barriers to marriage, the legal distinc-

tion between “bad” and “false” marriages, the reason that divorce was a man’s prerogative, and the wisdom in preventing child marriage.¹⁷

A year after al-Qassam was appointed *madhūn*, the mandate authorities were being pushed by the colonial office to develop civil marriage laws. Yet such legal amendments had few practical implications for the traditions and customs of weddings, and marriages in Palestine in 1928 remained the exclusive domain of the religious authorities. Muslim marriages in the district of Haifa were universally conducted by the court’s *madhūn*. But the *madhūn* still took with him the imprimatur of the state, and the questionnaire that al-Qassam completed in advance of taking the position was not simply bureaucratic. The shaykhs who acted as *madhūn* were not solely registrars working for the shari‘a court and the *qāḍī* but represented themselves, and were seen by villagers, as religious authorities able to adjudicate issues related to marriages. The Finnish anthropologist Hilma Granqvist, writing about marriage customs in the central Palestinian village of Artas at the time al-Qassam was a *madhūn* fifty miles to the north, describes one such interaction where the shaykh was required to balance the constraints placed on him by the state with village customs. When the *madhūn* was told that a bride was displeased with her family’s choice of groom, he availed himself of testimony from the bride.¹⁸

I let Hamdiye (a relative of the bride) relate this: “He [the *madhūn*] came to the girl and said: ‘Has thy brother taken over thy representation?’ She said: ‘Yes.’ They [the bride’s family] said: ‘Make the contract, sir!’ And he asked the girl: ‘Where is the bridegroom?’ They said: ‘In the village (i.e. his village Lifta)’ [sic]. He said ‘Then I will not make the contract.’ They said: ‘Why?’ He said: ‘Perhaps he is one-eyed, perhaps bald-headed, perhaps poor, perhaps the girl will not accept him. I am responsible. The Government will punish me.’”¹⁹

The *madhūn* typically drew on his religious authority for standing in the village he was visiting, but as the scene described by Granqvist shows, he was not beyond invoking the power of the state to buttress his decisions. By 1928, when al-Qassam became a *madhūn*, he was a representative of the district shari‘a court, which was a body under the oversight of the Supreme Muslim Council, which in turn owed its authority to the power vested in it by the mandate government. While making an appeal to an authority beyond his control, here the “Government,” to help a bride avoid marriage to a one-handed man, the *madhūn* in this case was not able to draw on the authority of his religious knowledge. He may have found it simply more expedient to protest his helplessness in the face of a government that would punish him for allowing a marriage that was equally proscribed by orthodox

Islamic jurisprudence. In the end, the interactions between the *madhūn* and the parties in the villages were circumscribed by a number of factors, most notably the question of authority and the tension between understandings of what constituted legitimate Islamic practice. Yet there is little evidence to suggest that al-Qassam found much in the way of barriers to acceptance in the villages around Haifa. Naturally, the role of *madhūn* was one that brought him into typically happy, celebratory encounters, and al-Qassam's bringing of his children along with him on the trips suggests that this role was anything but perfunctory for him.²⁰

The arrival of the *madhūn* would be an occasion of celebration, even on the rare occasion when the wedding followed at a later date. The marriage ceremony with which the *madhūn* was concerned involved the ascertaining of consent of representation on the bride's behalf by a male family member and the signing of the marriage contract, *ʿaqd al-nikāḥ* (and its registration with the shariʿa court). It was typically followed by the recitation by the *madhūn* of the *sūrat al-fātiḥah*, the first chapter of the Qurʿan, at which point the meeting of village elders and the responsible family members would conclude and those present would disperse for the wedding festivities. The procession (*zaffeh*) of the groom to the bride's house would be accompanied by singing, dancing, and ululation. Al-Qassam's time as a *madhūn* also saw the increasingly common use of automobiles in lieu of camels or horses in such festivities. After arriving at the bridegroom's home, a feast would be prepared and served to relatives and guests, followed by more singing and dancing.²¹

As *madhūn* then, al-Qassam was not simply traveling to different villages in the north but also meeting village leaders and family elders, engaging them in Islamic rituals, and participating in celebratory feasts. He seems to have also used the time to encourage villagers to lead a more moral lifestyle, much as he had done in Syria after returning from al-Azhar. "Put aside hatred," he is claimed to have said to villagers he encountered on these trips; "be kind and gentle to one another."²²

Al-Qassam's biographers differ on the extent to which he used his time as *madhūn* to proselytize his conception of jihad and recruit members to his organization. Subhi Yasin asserts that he used his time as *madhūn* to observe villagers' "psychology" but avoided discussing his plans for revolt. Yet Yasin also recounts that al-Qassam implored Hajj Amin al-Husayni to appoint him to the position of *wāʿiz*, an itinerant preaching post. An anonymous Qassamite reported that the mufti demurred to these requests, worried that al-Qassam would undermine al-Husayni's attempts to press the nationalist case politically. In this telling, al-Husayni was fully aware of al-Qassam's revolu-

tionary motives for going into the countryside and interacting with villagers and Bedouins.²³

British intelligence reported that in these villages, al-Qassam had been preaching “doctrines of Islam, cleverly interpolating (usually away from context) such passages from the Qoran [sic] as were calculated to stimulate a spirit of religious fanaticism.”²⁴ It’s a matter of record that a number of al-Qassam’s followers were from villages around Haifa, but the causal link between al-Qassam’s presence in these villages on shari‘a court business and villagers’ joining his movement is missing. It is important, then, to put al-Qassam’s role as *madhūn* into the context of his life: his financial circumstances and the trajectory of his career. This job was not necessarily part of an elaborate plan to recruit for jihad. Networks of labor migration between village and city show that many of the reported villagers who ended up in al-Qassam’s organization lived for a period in Haifa. They may have come into contact with him in a village, or they may have heard him preach in al-Istiqlal Mosque. Of the more prominent followers of al-Qassam during the 1930s, none of them seem to have first encountered him while he was registering marriages in the villages — or encountered him in their villages at all.

■ If al-Qassam biographers have differed over the political nature of his work in the mosques, at village weddings, and among railroad workers, there is little doubt that at the end of the decade, al-Qassam was convinced of the inevitability of armed conflict with the British authorities and Zionist settlers of Palestine. The summer of 1929 was a watershed for many in the nationalist camp, bringing some fence-sitters into the fold while convincing committed nationalists of the futility in cooperating with the British. As one British document describes, the riots that summer “produced an aftermath of intense racial hatred and the idea of exciting the Arab populace to armed rebellion soon began to be given practical expression.”²⁵

The conflict over the Western Wall (known also as the Wailing Wall and the *Ḥāʾiṭ al-Burāq*) began in the late nineteenth century but came to a head in the fall of 1928. In late September of that year, Jews worshipping at the Wailing Wall brought with them chairs and screens to separate men and women, challenging the status quo between Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem over the latter’s use of the holy site. Leaders from among the Yishuv and the international Zionist movement, as well as the Palestinians and Arab and Muslim worlds at large, placed the events in the Old City into the context of colonial Palestine. The mufti of Jerusalem raised the alarm of Jewish threats to the Muslim holy site, while Zionist leaders obliged such rhetoric by calling for greater immigration into Palestine to legitimize their claim on the site.²⁶

The next summer, tit-for-tat agitations over the wall finally led to violence. In August, riots and massacres took place all over the country, though primarily in Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safad. In the end, well over a hundred Jews and nearly as many Palestinians were killed.

By contrast, the violence in Haifa was relatively limited. It began as rumors of what was happening in Jerusalem spread north. On August 23, the day of the outbreak of violence at the wall, the Friday sermons at al-Istiqlal and al-Jarina featured impassioned speeches, including a notable one from the former *qāḍī* of Mecca and senior *ʿālim* in Haifa, Shaykh Yunis al-Khatib. The next morning, after the events of the previous day in Jerusalem had become widely known in Haifa, the mood in the city darkened. That evening, Haifawis gathered in Wadi Salib near al-Istiqlal and marched on the Jewish neighborhood of Hadar HaCarmel. There they were met by police and armed residents who opened fire on the crowd of Palestinians, wounding some and causing them to disperse.²⁷

Two days later, more street battles took place between Palestinians, Jews, and British police and infantry from the Green Howards regiment. These events were primarily restricted to the immediate vicinity of al-Istiqlal Mosque, as well as the boundary between the Palestinian neighborhoods and Hadar HaCarmel up the hill. They were spurred by the rumor that vehicles of armed Jews were marauding through the city and shooting Palestinians. At the hearings held by the British inquiry into the disturbances, known as the Shaw Commission, the district superintendent of police (DSP) for the Northern District, Major G. R. E. Foley, admitted not only that this was true but also that he had seen one such car stop and its inhabitants open fire on "Arabs of both sexes who were sitting about."²⁸

Tensions remained high between not only Palestinians and Jews but also both groups and the British authorities. Foley blamed the Yishuv for having "started up this row," and on another occasion told a Jewish deputation that they "started all this trouble." The assistant DSP was similarly angry with the fire coming from Jewish neighborhoods: "You people have upset my public security. . . . Last night in Nveh Shanan [*sic*] someone nearly shot me."²⁹

In Haifa, the subject of the Western Wall had been a "festering sore" that gave "a subject for agitators to work upon."³⁰

In the end, three men—Fuad Hijazi of Safad, and Muhammad Khalil Jumjum and ʿAtta Ahmad al-Zayr of Hebron—were arrested for their role in the violence of August 1929 and condemned to death. These were not the guileful agitators described in the British reports, but a nurse, a chauffeur, and a laborer.

Al-Qassam was immersed in these happenings in his community. As

imam and *khaṭīb* at al-Istiqlal, his role would have been prominent, and there is ample evidence that those around him and in complementary positions were delivering these lectures and speeches that the government considered inflammatory. And yet, unlike some of these others, al-Qassam's name is not mentioned in the Shaw Commission testimony, nor is he referenced in the newspapers or police reports at the time. While we don't know what he was doing in August 1929, we know what he did in the immediate aftermath, and it gives us some sense of just how momentous the events of that summer were in his ultimate trajectory.

If one were to choose a point, then, where al-Qassam's anti-colonial commitments intensified, it was probably in that hot August of 1929. The intermittent violence in Haifa was incomparable to the carnage seen in Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safad, but the tales from those cities — truths and fictions alike — nonetheless made their way over Mount Carmel.

Muslims in Haifa and its hinterland, connected to the Zionist project and the British authority in unique and complex ways, responded in equally complex ways. One morning in the early fall of 1929, leaflets were found attached to posts and plastered on buildings in Haifa. They detailed a call for a boycott of any cooperation with the Zionists, especially as it pertained to land sales, and threatened those who ignored this call. It continued: "[Our] decisions should be followed. He who is forewarned, is forearmed." At the top of the sheet, in bold black, was a simple print of a left hand. "Al-Kaff al-Aswad" it read. It was a statement from the Black Hand.³¹

The Tip of the Thread

Fuad Hijazi of Safad and the Hebronites Muhammad Khalil Jumjum and 'Atta Ahmad al-Zayr were hanged in the northern city of Acre on June 17, 1930. Ten months after their alleged involvement in the riots that left scores dead, they were the only three who faced the gallows. Appeals for intercession to King George from the archbishop of Canterbury and Kings Ibn Sa'ud, 'Abdallah, and Faysal were unsuccessful, and Hijazi was dropped through the trapdoor at eight in the morning. An hour later it was al-Zayr. And at ten it was Jumjum.¹

There is no doubt that the hangings made a deep impression upon 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, who is said to have referenced the event in sermons years later. Apocryphal tales describe the shaykh's presence in Acre among the discontented who witnessed the hangings, though this was unlikely, as the British had carried out the executions discreetly and cordoned the prison off as a security precaution. It is more likely that al-Qassam was outside the prison in Acre with the crowd that had gathered, awaiting word of the executions and the releasing of the bodies. Certainly, his attention would have been turned toward the matter: his constituency, the young men of Haifa and the villages of northern Palestine, were incensed.²

The Haifa newspaper *al-Yarmuk* proclaimed the executed to be "sons of Palestine" in a front-page announcement of their deaths. The Palestinian press had already made assertions that if the three were to be hanged, disorder along the lines of the violence of less than a year earlier would return. The short-lived newspaper *al-Hayat* warned that "Muslim youths will rise up" if the death sentences were carried out, while *al-Yarmuk* claimed an "explosion" of outrage would sweep across the Arab world.³

This response was symptomatic of a mood that had found its expression in

the events of 1929. Al-Qassam, too, had been increasingly vocal in his Friday sermons about the predations of the British administration in the waning years of the decade. After 1929, there was little doubt among anyone in Palestine that tensions between communities and the colonial government could turn to violent confrontation at any point. Still, over the half decade of 1930–1935, instead of rudimentary mass riots, that violent confrontation took the form of small, targeted acts of resistance to the British Mandate powers and the Zionist project, especially in the villages and colonies to the east of Haifa and throughout the lower Galilee. Suspicion fell on “secret societies” such as the Black Hand. These acts were carried out by different groups or cells, but many had connections to nationalist circles in Haifa, of which al-Qassam was an important figure. These networks of secret groups converged around the newly formed Young Men’s Muslim Association or al-Istiqlal Mosque, the docks in Haifa or the villages near Nazareth.

The increase in popular or mass expressions of nationalism—informed less by the discourse of diplomacy and personal or familial power, and more of religion and class—manifested around the country. However, a number of factors made Haifa distinctly *more* likely to reject the methods of advocacy and expression practiced by the traditional Palestinian leadership. Haifa had a history of regionally distinct opposition to the forces of Palestinian political power.

The families most often associated with national leadership came from central Palestine, typically Jerusalem, and thus Haifa developed a political class apart from such structures and was instead informed by other dynamics. First among them was the presence of a number of important Syrian exiles in positions of influence (such as al-Qassam, Kamil al-Qassab, and Hani Abu Muslih). This gave the city and its environs a stronger sense of connection to Bilad al-Sham and linked its residents more closely to “Greater Syrian” economic, political, and social networks. Furthermore, Haifa suffered more than most cities from land sales, labor strife, and Jewish immigration, making its citizens acutely aware of the threat posed by Zionist expansion. The communal experience of dispossession and displacement played out in neighborhoods of Haifa such as Wadi Salib and Ard al-Raml, where landless fellahin found work as menial laborers (or failed to find employment at all), lived in the slums at the foot of Mount Carmel or in the sandy littoral of the bay, and attended the schools in which al-Qassam taught or the mosques in which he preached.⁴

In Haifa, these ruptures made for a particularly unique space in which populist anti-colonial rhetoric could be articulated. The vernacular with which this populist rhetoric was expressed was, unsurprisingly, the ver-

narular of Islam. While al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni enjoyed a certain amount of legitimacy (and maintained strong support in a number of villages in the central hills) thanks to his position as grand mufti of Jerusalem, he was long associated in the minds of many Palestinians with traditional patronage and privilege (not to mention the mandate authority itself). The “soft-spoken, reserved” mufti drew on these networks to engage the Palestinian population in political demonstrations. In the hands of a popular preacher and organizer such as ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, Islamic political discourse relied instead on something different.⁵

Al-Qassam possessed not only a well-respected religious education and a commanding liturgical presence but also an appeal that transcended the political boundaries of the colonial system and the familial networks rooted in Ottoman Palestine. ‘Ulama’ such as al-Qassam were particularly appealing to the fellahin, who elevated such figures when they “possessed . . . high ethical and moral qualities, a wide culture, a charismatic personality, and influential rhetorical abilities.” Al-Qassam deployed an Islamic political discourse that appealed to dockworkers and government clerks, villager and urbanite alike, without arousing suspicion of personal ambition. He was charismatic and preached with a conviction described by Nimr al-Khatib as an experience like that of an earthquake. In many ways he was the anti-mufti.⁶

The relationships between Palestinian, British, and Jewish residents of Haifa were also mediated by particular issues unique to the city. As more fellahin from the countryside migrated into the city, the physical space of the municipality evolved over the course of the 1920s to the point where confrontation between Jews and Palestinians became more frequent. The slums that developed up the lower slope of Mount Carmel in the eastern part of Haifa were increasingly pinched between the port development and the expanding Jewish neighborhood of Hadar HaCarmel higher up the hill.⁷

Throughout northern Palestine, the cyclical process of violent encounters between Jews and Palestinians fueled the atmosphere of anti-colonial activism among the latter. Jews in rural communities in the north were increasingly devoted to arming themselves as both a quasi-state-building exercise and a bulwark against attacks by their Arab neighbors. Palestinians, on the other hand, looked at the arming—especially British training in the use of these arms—as a provocation and a further institutionalization of inequity between Jews and Arabs.⁸

Labor activism also became a factor in the political life of Palestine, and as the country’s industrial center, of Haifa in particular. The large infrastructure projects that remade eastern Haifa’s landscape, along with Jewish industrial facilities that had been set up with encouragement from the

budget-conscious British Colonial Office, became the targets of strikes and demonstrations by underpaid and overworked Palestinians. As the years went by, Zionist labor unions pushed for more jobs and higher pay for Jewish workers, which had cascading deleterious effects on the Palestinian workforce. Here, too, al-Qassam attempted to intervene on behalf of the Palestinians of Haifa.⁹

As far as the actual violence in 1929, Haifa's statistics were not extraordinary. In fact, unlike in Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safad, there were relatively few casualties at all. While Haifa had seen demonstrations before 1929 and would see many more over the course of the 1930s, the British administration was surprised by the intensity of the violence in the country as a whole. Their shambolic response, characterized by a series of contradictory policy reversals, was exacerbated by slow economic growth in the 1920s and a profound budgetary crisis. In response, the administration sought to reorganize its internal security apparatus, namely the Palestine Police, to better confront the perceived threats of disorder that the riots brought into sharp relief. The number of British policemen (thought to be more competent and neutral) would be increased relative to their Jewish and Palestinian counterparts, and they would be expected to participate more actively in investigating and preventing crime. Notably, the Criminal Investigation Department of the Palestine Police, which had been disbanded in the transition to civilian rule in 1922, was reinstated and, over the course of the next few years, expanded considerably, from an initial thirteen members in 1930 to fifty-six by 1935. The Criminal Investigation Department, known commonly by its abbreviation the CID, was responsible for state surveillance, which was increased on Palestinian political leaders and a number of influential local firebrands.¹⁰

Meanwhile, some elements of Haifawi political life returned to the patterns that had developed in the years before the 1929 riots. Palestinian factionalism resurfaced. The Christian community's leadership further distanced themselves from the rhetoric of the mufti that increasingly relied on religious as opposed to national symbols. The Yishuv in Haifa continued to expand and consolidate its outsized influence on the Haifa municipal council in tandem with the development of Jewish enclaves.

But this was hardly the story of the aftermath of the riots. The early 1930s saw a shift in Palestinian resistance to the British and Zionist settlement taking place in the mosques, work-yards, and society halls. Evidence of this shift can be found in the language of the petitions from Palestinian leaders of the emerging mass movements on one hand, and police summaries of disturbances of a political flavor on the other.

For al-Qassam personally, the period of 1930–1935 was one of accelerated

political activism. This activism took many forms but emerged from his community organizing during the 1920s. His labor activism took a backseat to his increased involvement in the Young Men's Muslim Association and the shadow operations of that organization's various arms-length resistance groups. His sermons changed, too, transforming his "religious lessons to those that instigated jihad."¹¹ The active indoctrination and training of young Palestinians in paramilitary operations placed al-Qassam's followers in the vanguard of anti-colonial resistance in Palestine during the British Mandate.

■ Few communities in Haifa were more affected by the momentous changes that swept through the city in the years that followed the 1929 riots than the neighborhood of Wadi Salib. Geographically, Wadi Salib lies to the southeast of the city's center, sandwiched between the docklands to the northeast and the slope of Mount Carmel to the southwest. More importantly, it was at the center of the colonial administration's planned industrial and commercial redevelopment of a city that was itself the center of Britain's industrial and commercial plan for the Middle East. The administration, over the course of the 1930s, built a deepwater harbor; the central headquarters and workshop of Palestine's rail network; the pipeline terminal, storage facility, and refinery for their Iraqi oil supply; and the city's new commercial boulevard, all within Wadi Salib's extended environs.¹²

However, few Palestinians in Wadi Salib benefitted from Haifa's economic development over the middle years of the mandate. While some residents found employment in construction or as stevedores at the port, many more suffered from the privations of the city's rapid development. One of the prevailing issues was the increasing incorporation of Haifawis—of urban or rural origin—into the global capitalist system. The administration in Palestine, operating under an imperative from London to be self-financing, pursued policies that were to inevitably alienate all but an elite among their Arab subjects. For instance, the employment in the large infrastructure projects, of which Haifa saw many, was outsourced to contractors who turned a blind eye to minimum wage standards set by the government. This became a particularly contentious issue near the end of the decade, when Zionist labor unions were able to gain higher minimum quotas for Jewish workers, who received higher wages and worked fewer hours. As a greater percentage of the workforce received inflated wages, subcontractors pushed Palestinians to work more hours for less pay. Further, Zionist agencies were able to attract Jewish investors from abroad, and Jewish-owned corporations were given concessions to build many of these key infrastructure projects, most notably the Rutenberg concession to electrify Palestine. These corpo-

rations were themselves under pressure from Hebrew labor unions and the Yishuv's leadership to employ as many Jews as possible. By the late 1920s stevedoring in the Haifa port, for instance, was itself no longer a principally Palestinian occupation. Egyptians and Syrians from the Hauran had many of the jobs, and Jewish organizations such as the Histadrut and later the Haifa Workers Council were able to further cut into the market share locals once maintained. When Jews did manage to gain a foothold in the work at the port, on average they were paid thirty to fifty percent more, and worked fewer hours, than their Palestinian counterparts.¹³

Beyond the issue of pay equity, which would go unresolved during the mandate, the fundamental issue remained: employment for Palestinians was insecure. The local mercantile systems under the Ottomans had been better at providing economic and social security for their participants. The First World War, which devastated communities throughout the Mashriq, was followed by a mandate system that institutionalized new forms of economic patronage. This insecurity was most present when the economy suffered, usually as a result of global economic developments such as the Great Depression in the early 1930s or local downturns such as the construction bust in the late 1920s. During these ebbs, workers were left with few opportunities for employment and either scraped by in meager urban conditions in slums such as Wadi Salib or returned to their ancestral villages in Haifa's hinterland.¹⁴

Employment for the Palestinians not working on the major infrastructure projects was particularly precarious. An example can be found in the statement made by Muhammad 'Issa, an associate of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's and father of four, to the police in January 1933. Here he describes his seasonal earnings and his drift from trade to trade: "Previously I was working in a charcoal business. I used to buy charcoal from Acre and Haifa. As the charcoal business did not pay and I could not earn my living from it, I left the work and decided on other work but for a time I could not find any." 'Issa ended up apprenticing with a tinsmith in Ard al-Yahud, the neighborhood just to the south of Wadi Salib. There he worked for three months without wages before moving to apprentice at another shop. That second tenure lasted only two weeks before he returned to the original workshop, where he secured a new arrangement with that shop owner to divide the business. From that point on, he earned an average of "six to ten piastres a day" (or about sixty to one hundred mils a day). This was less than what most of the underpaid Palestinian workers at the Nesher Cement factory earned. Yet this was a much more stable income than what he had made in the charcoal business: "During the winter time I used to earn more than ten piasters, . . . but in

the summer I used to earn less and sometimes I lost money on the business.” He worked in the charcoal business for only eight months. Before that, he sold watermelons.¹⁵

There were too few jobs for locals, and the neighborhood (not to mention other Arab quarters in the city) was swelling with recent arrivals from the countryside. This poverty manifested in a number of ways. Over the course of the late 1920s and early 1930s, the Palestinian quarters of Haifa suffered from an increasing “economic and physical deterioration and segregation.” By 1931, Haifa was experiencing a growth rate among the Palestinians of 87 percent, and that year, of the roughly 34,000 Palestinian inhabitants of Haifa, nearly a third were living in impermanent shelters such as tin huts, which British officials described as “miserable” and “deplorable.”¹⁶

Crime rates in Wadi Salib and its neighboring quarters such as Ard al-Raml and Wadi Nisnas were high. There was frequent begging and homelessness among this group—especially when they weren’t earning day wages. This was particularly true of Wadi Salib; being the area closest to the port development, it saw rapid growth and increased population density. The economic marginalization of Wadi Salib’s inhabitants was further reflected in the neighborhood’s lack of infrastructure. While the municipal council met regularly to enact improvement schemes, many of the city’s most desperate areas were excluded. Road improvements and electricity, which had controversially been awarded to Pinhas Rutenberg’s Palestine Electric Company, were delayed in coming to Wadi Salib. While the electrical grid for the neighborhood was proposed in 1927, it took at least another six years to be installed. Sanitary and sewage construction lagged. A major waste collection point was installed on Wadi Salib Street in 1924, while work on the sewage system in the neighborhood took nearly a decade and a half (1929–1943) to complete. The drainage system covered only the southern and central portions of Wadi Salib, while the neighborhood’s north end remained unconnected. Plague-infected rats were discovered in a neighboring slum. At the end of 1934, all the neighborhood’s inhabitants were ordered by the Public Health Department to receive inoculations following a smallpox outbreak.¹⁷

The slums of Wadi Salib became home to many of the young men who found (or were hoping to find) work doing menial labor as part of the port’s development. But while other neighborhoods were able to expand outward, Wadi Salib was pinched between the bay to the northeast and the growing (and increasingly prosperous) Jewish neighborhood of Hadar HaCarmel, which lay halfway up Mount Carmel and was, by the end of the 1920s, the growing social and economic center of newly arrived European Jews.¹⁸

Hadar HaCarmel was a mixed neighborhood with its own burgeoning

problem with slum dwellings, but it also housed an increasing number of Jews who had found employment in the civil service or in middle management of the Jewish-owned industries that were located in Haifa. In the 1920s, Hadar HaCarmel became the focus of Jewish urban development schemes that borrowed heavily from the English Garden City movement, envisioning cityscapes designed with the health and efficiency of its residents in mind. One newspaper ad in 1932 describes a “modern 5 room apartment” for lease in Hadar HaCarmel with service rooms and a garden, while another advertises the “first and biggest” hotel in Haifa, the “city of tomorrow,” complete with hot and cold running water in each room.¹⁹

Beyond its inhabitants, Wadi Salib itself was subjected to the British drive toward a vision of colonial modernity for Haifa. As they had done in Cairo, the British planned a wide boulevard for the downtown that would run parallel to the port development and crown the city’s pride of place in the British economic scheme for the Middle East.²⁰

Known as the Kingsway, the street cut through the heart of the neighborhood and severed its residents’ easy access to their workplace. In *Land of Progress*, the historian Jacob Norris explains the effects of the Kingsway proposal: “Maps of Kingsway’s projected route in 1931 show the street cutting through a total of 256 properties, all of which had to be either partly or completely destroyed.” The resulting protests by residents of the neighborhood against the Kingsway’s proposed route came to little. “Despite the offers of compensation,” Norris writes, “the rising property prices around the new harbor area meant it would be impossible for [displaced residents] to relocate anywhere nearby.”²¹

The Kingsway thus remade Haifa’s downtown along the lines of European aesthetic and spatial principles. As happenstance would have it, the boulevard’s path through razed homes in Wadi Salib passed by al-Jarina Mosque and ended directly opposite the steps of al-Istiqlal Mosque.

This was the social and economic direction the community around ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam was heading as the new decade began. Among the dispossessed, among the homeless, among the young men with few prospects in a colonial system that seemed intent on taking their land in the rural village or razing their homes in the urban slum, al-Qassam found a community receptive to his message of Arab and Islamic solidarity in the face of a colonial oppressor. It was in the 1930s that al-Qassam was able to employ newly formed organizations to turn his anti-colonial message into action.

■ With the backdrop of a deteriorating social and economic order, al-Qassam and a small group of Haifawis long active in nationalist circles

turned their attention toward organizing an increasingly discontented population. When the *majlisi* faction (backed in part by the Supreme Muslim Council) was nearly shut out of the municipal council seats in the 1927 municipal elections by an alliance between the Zionists, the Christians, and the one-time mayor of Haifa Hasan Shukri, defeated nationalist candidates such as Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim hardened their positions against the institutions of municipal governance that seemed to favor the Zionists and their collaborators. Men such as Ibrahim and al-Qassam looked to—and formed—alternative institutions that challenged the hegemony of the colonial model. They believed that cultivating a strong, organized constituency would supersede the power that the *majlisi* faction had lost in the 1927 elections. To this end, Ibrahim, al-Qassam, and others founded the Jam'iyyat al-Shubban al-Muslimin, known popularly in English as the Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) in 1928.²²

The YMMA was first established in Cairo in 1927 in response to Christian missionary work in the British protectorate and was modeled loosely on the YMCA, which had come to Egypt a few years earlier. In Palestine, the decision to organize a Palestinian YMMA was driven by similar concerns. The YMCA's arrival in Jerusalem came, not coincidentally in the minds of many Palestinians, with the beginning of British colonial administration following the war. This perceived connection between colonialism and missionary work in the form of the YMCA was further entrenched with the World Missionary Conference in 1928, which saw Christian missionary organizations convene in Jerusalem and, as Weldon Matthews points out, was viewed by Palestinians as an "organizational step towards the re-Christianization of the Holy Land." Raising additional alarm was that the long-serving president of the YMCA in Palestine was Henry Bowman, who at the same time was district education commissioner, responsible for oversight of the mandate's education policy. On the more practical level, because it was explicitly sectarian, the YMCA in Haifa drew many of the city's Christians out of communal associations with their Muslim neighbors and deeper into sectarian "social and financial segregation."²³

Shortly after the YMMA was established in Palestine, al-Qassam was one of twelve founders of the branch in Haifa and was elected its first president. The original charter of the Haifa branch laid out a program that cleaved closely to similar organizations found in modern nationalist movements throughout the world during this period. In general, it called for support for the "national movement" (*al-haraka al-wataniyya*) in its "national resistance to colonialism and Zionism." It also advocated self-improvement schemes such as education for illiterates and supported complementary

institutions such as the Boy Scouts. As a founding member, ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam took on a leading role in early meetings and was certainly influential, along with Haifa’s shari‘a court registrar Shaykh Muhammad Hashim al-Khatib, in solidifying the Islamic character of the movement. Ultimately the YMMA’s initial aims were tied back in to the discourse of a Salafist Islam that was centered on the milieu of Haifa’s Islamic Society, the headquarters of which hosted the founding YMMA meeting. Encouraging the “turning back to religion” and the “commitment to its provisions and duties,” the charter called for a return to a moral code (one explicitly prescribed by Islam) in resisting evils (*al-munkirāt*) and discouraging the forbidden (*al-muḥarimāt*). While these particular points may have appeared on the charters of YMMA branches from Alexandria to Acre, they echo al-Qassam’s long-standing concern for the ethical practices of his constituents, from his return to Jabla after his studies at al-Azhar to his posts in Haifa.²⁴

For al-Qassam, the YMMA was an organizational aspect of his drive to improve the conditions of Haifa’s working poor. The YMMA found the area around the development schemes, such as the port, nearby railyards, and oil depot, fertile ground for recruiting members. In response to the increased membership from among the working class, the YMMA advocated vigorously for more employment opportunities for Palestinians and improved working conditions for those already with jobs. Ibrahim and al-Qassam were particularly active on this front. The Haifa YMMA thus developed a symbiotic relationship with the city’s lower class. As it gained greater membership, its appeals to the colonial authorities were less easily ignored. Soon after it was formed, the YMMA petitioned the British administration for a greater share of lower-middle-class civil service positions at the Haifa port to be given to Palestinians.²⁵

Not surprisingly, the British administration resisted these efforts. While the YMMA had initially been established as an explicitly apolitical association, there is little doubt that from the beginning, many members hoped that it would serve as a platform to advance a nationalist agenda. The private meetings of the association were often dominated by political discussion even when the public face tried to maintain a facade of impartiality. This was a difficult position for the association to be in. As an official organization under the mandate’s laws of association, inherited as they were from the Ottomans, registration was contingent on a certain quiescence toward colonial authority. Yet in the wake of the 1929 riots, the government put more pressure on its employed members to leave the association and prevented civil servants and teachers from joining in the first place. Postal workers were warned not to join, or to quit the association if they wanted to keep

their jobs. One historian has argued that when the prohibition against Palestinians employed by the government took hold and the YMMA lost many of its middle- and lower-middle-class members, the “caliber” of the group and its activities began to change.²⁶

It is difficult to assess whether the government sanctions against civil servants joining the organization or the organization’s increasingly political activities came first. It does seem to have been true that as fewer of the YMMA members whose livelihoods depended in part on a government income stayed in the organization, members with little or nothing to lose put pressure on the organization to become more active in its anti-colonialist rhetoric. The rift between YMMA members who felt threatened with losing employment and those with insecure or no employment at all emerged in a number of other communities in Palestine at the same time. Debates among these factions took place in a public forum at the 1929 YMMA congress in Jaffa and were reported on in the Palestinian press. While there was a push by the working-class members for the association to take on a greater role in advocating for political and economic change, this element of the association gained momentum only in early 1930, after the riots of the previous summer.²⁷

The YMMA served as a vehicle for al-Qassam’s message: with its nationalist undercurrent, its leaders sought to increase the welfare of Palestinians through on-the-ground economic and social outreach. These activities carried on through the turbulent years of the early 1930s, when labor disruptions, protests, and riots in Haifa and the north would prominently feature the association’s involvement. In short order it proved to be a fertile environment for activists convinced of the necessity of resistance to colonialism, and among them, members willing to turn that resistance into a violent one.

■ In the months and years after its founding in Haifa, the YMMA spread to the smaller regional centers in northern Palestine, including the towns of Acre, Tiberias, and Safad, and the villages of Saffuriyya, Shefa‘Amr, al-Tira, and ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam’s own village of Balad al-Shaykh. As the president of the Haifa YMMA, al-Qassam played an active role in organizing branches in smaller towns. As *Filastin* reported in mid-October 1932, al-Qassam led a delegation about twelve miles south of Haifa to the villages of Jaba‘, Ijzim, and ‘Ayn Ghazal. In Jaba‘, al-Qassam prayed at the mosque and gave a speech about the association and “the purpose of the Islamic faith.” Later that afternoon, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim arrived from Haifa and spoke to the villagers about economic development and construction projects. In Ijzim, a student performed for the visitors, singing nationalist songs and anthems celebrating the association. In ‘Ayn Ghazal there was much of the same. One speech,

presumably made by al-Qassam, explained the “principles of the association” and “reconciled them with the orientations of a moral society and social progress.” All of these branches maintained close contact with Haifa and regularly received visits from the latter’s executive committee, including al-Qassam.²⁸

Representatives from branches throughout the country came to Haifa in 1930 for the third YMMA Congress. There, al-Qassam was elected to the national executive committee and several resolutions were adopted, most notably one calling for the YMMA to “secretly train Arab youths [men] to take up arms” and another to “secretly call [others] to arm.” ‘Izzat Darwaza, the Arab nationalist and Palestinian politician, writes that out of the YMMA Congress, jihadist cells (*al-khalāyya al-jihādiyya*) were organized.²⁹

The success of each branch’s ability to organize such secret cells varied wildly. The most prolific resistance group to have ties to a YMMA branch during this period was the branch in Saffuriyya. Al-Qassam biographer Abdullah Schleifer argues that al-Qassam had a difficult time recruiting YMMA members “from among the predominantly middle-class members” of the Haifa branch to become activists in these secret cells but was much more successful among the smaller villages of Haifa’s hinterland.³⁰ Yet Schleifer’s claim may not have been accurate for a number of reasons: First, the “middle-class” composition of the YMMA declined significantly following the 1929 riots and the administration’s subsequent turn toward more actively dissuading civil servants’ membership. It is unsurprising, then, that there would be fewer fighters emerging from the middle class of the organization, since that cohort of membership was eroding quickly over this period. Second, many of those who would join the secret cells initially organized under the auspices of the YMMA were not, in fact, YMMA members. Anecdotal evidence suggests that membership in the association may have been too great a financial burden for some of the lower class in Haifa. Last, distinguishing between a “Haifa YMMA” and the YMMAs in the villages outside of Haifa is a distinction without a difference. YMMA meetings in smaller villages often served as social clubs, where lectures—typically religious in nature—were delivered and discussions took place. Yet the in-and-out migration between the villages and Haifa meant that, for instance, a YMMA member from Saffuriyya or Shefa‘Amr may have been living most of the time in the Haifa neighborhoods of al-Zawara or Wadi Salib. The distinction, then, between rural and urban, YMMA and not, became increasingly blurred as the social and political outlook in northern Palestine grew more dire after 1929.³¹

Other organizations formed in 1930 and 1931 that would compete with and complement the YMMA. Boy Scout troops throughout Palestine actively

took part in quasi-nationalist actions, including patrolling the coast on the lookout for illegal Jewish immigration. Al-Qassam was reportedly involved in the Haifa Boy Scout troop, which was run by his longtime associate 'Atif Nur Allah. Additionally, the Haifa branch of the Youth Congress, an organization created by the SMC, opened in 1931 and worked closely with the YMMA. In 1931, the YMMA chairman in Acre, Akram Zu'aytir, met with fellow nationalists Hashim al-Sabi of Qalqiliya and Hamdi al-Husayni to discuss the possibility of forming a secretive youth society with the goal of "absolute independence" for the Arab countries. Thus, in the year and a half after the 1929 riots, young men would increasingly be at the vanguard of nationalist agitation. The unprecedented levels of economic migration often severed traditional bonds between villagers and the *a'yān*, undermining nationalist direction from the center. Along with the youth movements, new leaders—many, such as Zu'aytir, young men themselves—emerged and came to drive the more active elements of political movements.³²

These organizations came together with a united cause in the summer of 1931, when it was revealed that Jewish settlements—especially in the north—were arming themselves. The question of armed Jewish communities in Palestine had been a sensitive one since the early days of the Zionist project. Colonists claimed they needed weapons to protect themselves, while Palestinians saw the arming of colonies as a step toward the militarization of the Zionist movement. Abu Ibrahim summed up the sentiment among al-Qassam's followers to this development: "The English allowed them [Zionist settlers] to arm themselves, to build buildings and fortifications on military bases, and to shoot and kill Arabs, and [we] were not allowed to bear arms and confront them the same way. . . . The English prevented the Arabs from having weapons." Later, after a friend was shot dead, Abu Ibrahim confronted al-Qassam, saying, "How long will we remain without weapons and the Jews are armed and using their weapons on us? We have to arm and defend ourselves." To this entreaty, al-Qassam is reported to have acquiesced: "I do not mind, collect some money and buy arms."³³

The consensus among the Palestinian leadership seemed to be a tacit acquiescence to the inevitability of the weapons themselves, but by the middle of July 1931, the Palestinian press published details of the British administration's involvement in weapons training for these colonies. The British intervention in teaching colonists the use of these weapons was a particular provocation. Calls appeared in the press and in demonstrations for the parallel arming of Palestinian communities near Jewish colonies.³⁴

Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim dispatched Muhammad Zayd from the Islamic Society to travel to Jaffa and explain their position to the society's branch there.

Secret meetings took place in Safad, where it was decided to “send agents at once” to Syria to purchase weapons for Arab villages. In Nablus, ‘Izzat Darwaza, Jamal al-Qasim, and Fahmi al-‘Abbushi gave speeches attacking the Arab Executive for its moderation in response to the weapons issue. And later that month the “first organized youth protest” against Britain’s Jewish National Home policy and the traditional Palestinian nationalist leadership’s inability to effectively combat it took place in Nablus. Organized by nationalist associates of al-Qassam’s, it was violently suppressed by the administration. The salience of the Jewish weapons issue, the dissatisfaction with the Arab Executive, and a ubiquitous anti-British sentiment among young men made northern Palestine a hotbed of nationalist agitation.³⁵

■ The political mood in Haifa, and throughout Palestine generally, was bleak. Haifa, uniquely positioned among the cities of Palestine to incubate alternative avenues of political discontent, was partly or fully divorced from the traditional national leadership. While the *majlisi* and *mu‘āraḍa* factions remained active in political circles in Haifa, in August 1932 a third faction—short-lived yet influential—emerged in the form of the Arab Independence Party (*Hizb al-Istiqlal al-‘Arabiyya*). Al-Istiqlal was created with three goals, as expressed on the official statement registering it as a political organization on August 13, 1932: “1) The independence of the Arab countries; 2) The Arab countries are one and inseparable; 3) Palestine is an Arab country and an integral part of Syria.” The last point was particularly contentious as the idea of a “Greater Syria”—of which Palestine made up the southern section—was a political position increasingly on the wane in Palestine.³⁶

Many of al-Qassam’s associates, including early organizers in the Haifa YMMA, were a part of al-Istiqlal’s founding: Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, al-Qassam’s closest associate among Haifa’s merchant middle class; Akram Zu‘aytir, the young Nablusi and founder of the Acre YMMA; ‘Awni ‘Abd al-Hadi, the Haifawi lawyer who would defend many accused associates of al-Qassam’s; and Subhi al-Khadra, a fierce, square-jawed, soldier-turned-lawyer from Safad who helped establish the YMMA there. Despite these close associations, there is little direct evidence to prove that al-Qassam was a member of al-Istiqlal. Some Istiqlalists have been keen to claim al-Qassam, yet his name is conspicuously absent from the party’s early documents. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of interaction between al-Qassam and the leadership of al-Istiqlal. They were nationalists of a pan-Arab persuasion who shared a home, formed and led each other’s organizations, were outside the traditional coterie of Palestine’s leadership, and had the same ultimate goal in the independence of Arab land from colonial control.³⁷

That summer and fall of 1932 was a particularly important period for al-Qassam. In July, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim nominated al-Qassam as his replacement, and al-Qassam was elected acting president of the national YMMA at its annual congress in Jaffa. The position gave al-Qassam's voice an even greater reach and increased his notoriety on the national stage. One hypothesis suggests that Ibrahim's support for al-Qassam at this point shows that al-Qassam was accelerating his preparations for an armed revolt. Yet it seems that Ibrahim's tenure as president was not without its controversies. At the July congress, Ibrahim was verbally "attacked" by YMMA officials over his financial relationship with a tobacco firm in Haifa. His presidency was intensifying rifts within the organization, and the acrimony over this particular issue was profound enough that in the weeks following the congress, the Acre YMMA split into two separate entities. Ibrahim's decision to nominate al-Qassam as his replacement at the congress may thus have had more banal motives.³⁸

Many of the more general histories, and even a number of biographies, see al-Qassam's involvement in the YMMA—in its entirety—as a means to organize nationalist revolutionaries. After al-Qassam was named president, more YMMA branches were indeed established in villages in northern Palestine. But to assume that al-Qassam's interest in organizing Palestinian youth was merely utilitarian, as a means of recruiting a rebel army, ignores the more prosaic work al-Qassam did within the organization and beyond.³⁹

■ The expanding network of YMMA activists and political opposition in the form of al-Istiqlal drew the attention of the British Mandate's security services and cast al-Qassam, Ibrahim, and al-Khadra into suspicion. This was particularly true of al-Khadra, likely because of his rumored role in the 1929 riots in Safad. The CID maintained close watch on al-Khadra in the years after the riots as he became involved in the Arab Executive, which he subsequently quit before publishing a scathing critique of its inability to challenge the administration more aggressively. Al-Khadra directed his energies instead to the Istiqlal Party and a number of associations in which he worked closely with al-Qassam.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, al-Qassam continued to deliver sermons in al-Istiqlal Mosque that the British authorities deemed "violent and seditious."⁴¹ CID reports contain different examples of the grievances that became fodder for al-Qassam's sermons: in May of 1932, speeches of a "pan-Islamic character" were made at YMMA meetings and in al-Istiqlal Mosque, railing against the alleged conversion of Algerians at the hands of the French colonial authorities.⁴² Later that summer, in anticipation of the festivities surrounding the

commemoration of the Battle of Hattin, the CID reports again singled out al-Qassam for his religious lectures in Haifa and its surrounding villages that they considered seditious and threatening to the sentiments of the Christian minority. The commemorations for the Battle of Hattin, which took place in Haifa in September 1932, assumed the tone of a nationalist celebration and saw an assembly of political figures from throughout Palestine. Members of the Istiqlal Party played important roles in the festivities, imploring the audience through a number of speeches to remember the example of Saladin's victory over the Crusaders.⁴³

Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim recounts that after al-Qassam had declared his public hostility for the British, the shaykh was investigated criminally, fired from his position as *madhūn*, fined, and imprisoned. Yet there is no mention of his imprisonment by the British in other biographies or in the posthumous British reports about his activities. What we do know is that at this point al-Qassam, in part because of his connections to the YMMA, was firmly on the radar of British intelligence.⁴⁴

In fact, the YMMA's "secret call to arms" that both Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim and 'Izzat Darwaza describe in their memoirs was not at all secret. The next day, British intelligence issued a report that stated, "The mission of buying arms for the Arabs is what was decided on at this short secret meeting."⁴⁵ The CID began looking into the YMMA for its alleged connection with other inchoate paramilitary groups already active in Palestine. In November 1932, the CID reported, "Side-by-side with this pan-Arab extremist effort, the pan-Islam movement which received its last inspiration from the Islamic Congress [the meeting in Jerusalem], is progressing." The CID defined these extremists as "essentially anti-Christian, anti-European, anti-government, and pro-Arab in character. . . . The intent shown in the organizing of branches of the YMMA in towns and villages, particularly in the north, and the revival of Moslem feelings, are some of its results."⁴⁶

On December 15, the Istiqlal Party held another mass rally organized in Haifa. 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi, al-Khadra, and Ibrahim gave speeches denouncing land sales, Jewish immigration, and the recently amended Prevention of Crime Ordinance, which gave district commissioners a free hand in repressing what they perceived to be subversive threats to the colonial order. It's unknown if al-Qassam was on stage or made speeches himself, but it's likely he was there. The band of the Haifa Boy Scout troop played patriotic songs. A week later, a small black bomb, the size of an orange, went through the window of the Yaacobi home in Nahalal, and 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's course toward confrontation with the British was propelled exponentially further along.⁴⁷

Nahalal, 1932

Mustafa 'Ali Ahmad, Salih Ahmad Taha, and Ahmad Tawbah stopped just beyond the Saffuriyya village limits on the night of December 23, 1932, to reaffirm before God their commitment to the mission they were about to undertake. The three were residents of the village and knew the area well. They had chosen a night with strong westerly winds and rain in the hope that the winter weather would obscure their retreat across the rocky fields and orchards. But the rain had made the ground soft, leaving trails of footprints as the three men walked toward the Jewish settlement of Nahalal, about five miles to the southwest.¹

Between the three, they carried a single rifle and a small black bomb, which 'Ali Ahmad lobbed through the window of one of the houses near the edge of the settlement just before 10:00 p.m. It was the first house they had seen with occupants, and 'Ali Ahmad and Tawbah quickly returned past darkened houses and stables toward Taha, who stood guard with the rifle near the edge of the colony.

A few minutes earlier, Joseph Yaacobi, a forty-one-year-old farmer originally from California, had wakened to a strange sound. He went into the other room of his bare, two-room wooden home, where he found a broken window and a smoking device on the floor near the bed of his nine-year-old son, David. The bomb exploded as Joseph reached toward it, taking four fingers off his left hand and leaving wounds in his face and neck. David's injuries were worse, and he died in the Hadassah hospital the next afternoon.²

A group of settlers from Degania, the original kibbutz in Palestine, had founded the Jewish colony of Nahalal in 1921. Unlike Degania, Nahalal was established as a moshav—the first of its kind in Palestine—a fateful distinction for the Yaacobis, one of the community's original families. In Nahalal

the former kibbutzim distributed land equally but decollectivized some elements that had been standard practice in the kibbutz movement. For instance, the children were no longer housed separately from their families in a single dorm.³

In fact, there had been a string of attacks in northern Palestine in 1931 and 1932. In Kibbutz Yajur, a Jewish settlement six miles to the southeast of Haifa, three settlers were killed and five injured in a shooting in April 1931. Less than a year later and only a mile to the northeast of Yajur, another settler was shot dead in Kfar Hasidim, a colony settled seven years earlier by Hasidic Jews from Poland. Others followed in the villages and towns in the Haifa area: in Baysan, the German Farm on Mount Carmel, and the Nesher cement factory near Balad al-Shaykh. When the father, Joseph Yaacobi, died of his wounds a week later, the pressure on the police to put an end to these attacks was immense.⁴

The funerals for the Yaacobis — first nine-year-old David's, then Joseph's — were well attended and included leading figures in the Yishuv, such as the political director of the Jewish Agency, Chaim Arlosoroff (who was murdered himself less than six months later), and David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Workers' Party, MAPAI. During speeches at the funerals, speakers complained that the Jewish colonies in the north were under attack and that the British Mandate government had failed to protect its Jewish citizens in that part of Palestine. An editorial a week after the bombing was direct: "The evil genius who inspired this cowardly crime must be traced and uprooted, the evil spirit which makes possible such genius to flourish in this land must be eradicated." It continued, "The Jews of this country have been robbed of the sense of security to which as citizens, and not paying guests, they are fully entitled. The sense of security can be restored in one way only, by bringing to book the perpetrators and the inspirers of this crime."⁵

Three weeks after the bombing, the assistant district superintendent of police (ADSP) for the district of Haifa, an Egyptian Copt named Halim Basta, arrested Ahmad Ghalayini and Khalil Muhammad 'Issa. Ghalayini and 'Issa operated a workshop that repaired small kerosene stoves (called a primus), and Basta had identified this workshop by comparing bits of metal found at the bomb scene in Nahalal with striation marks on a vice in the workshop. He would later testify that he had "discovered that the particles of lead and other metals found in the prisoner's shop . . . were similar in construction and material to those contained in the bomb thrown in Nahalal."⁶

This bit of forensic evidence was presented at Ghalayini's and 'Issa's preliminary hearings in the spring of 1933 and their trial that fall. Basta, another police inspector, and an assortment of metalworkers testified to the likeli-

hood that the bomb had been made in the workshop. The police were certain they had found their bomb makers.⁷

■ In April 1933—almost four months after the bombing—the Palestine Police carried out raids in Saffuriyya. The village had been cast in suspicion when trackers discovered footprints leading from the Yaacobi home to the Saffuriyya-ShafaʿAmr road on the night of the bombing. These raids uncovered a bomb and a rifle in the home of Mustafa ʿAli Ahmad, and he and two other villagers were arrested.

After the April raids in Saffuriyya, five stood accused of “pre-meditated murder.” Ghalayini and ʿIssa were joined by ʿAli Ahmad, Ibrahim Ahmad al-Hajj Khalil, and Ahmad Muhammad ʿAbd al-Qadir. But, unlike his co-accused, ʿAli Ahmad was willing to talk. He “confessed” to his role in the bombing and to the guilt of his co-accused, and he took the police to the scene to retrace his steps on the night of the attack.⁸

On May 29, 1933, ʿAli Ahmad signed a document confessing to his involvement in the murder. The statement began not with any biographical details or context to the crime of which he had been accused, but with a list of men with whom ʿAli Ahmad claimed to have been involved in a secret society connected to the Young Men’s Muslim Association in Haifa. That list included the accused bomb makers Khalil Muhammad ʿIssa and Ahmad Ghalayini, but also Shaykh Mahmud Zaʿrura and Shaykh ʿIzz al-Din al-Qassam.⁹

In ʿAli Ahmad’s “confession”—which he later recanted and claimed to have made under duress—he admitted to having gone to Nahalal with the four co-accused but to having been misled about the purpose of the middle-of-the-night visit. He insisted that he had accompanied Ghalayini and ʿIssa through the settlement fence because he thought they were going to steal cows. As he waited nearby for the cows to be brought out, he heard an explosion and took off running when his companions emerged in full flight. He suggested that the bomb and rifle found in his possession had been entrusted to him for safekeeping, but that that was the extent of his knowledge.¹⁰

His detailed description of a secret society whose express purpose was “to defend our country from the Jews by killing them and robbing them” formed the foundation of the state’s case in both the Nahalal trial and a subsequent prosecution the following year. This society, he alleged, had been formed by ʿIssa and a few others in the wake of the 1929 riots but numbered less than a dozen in Saffuriyya. The oath that ʿAli Ahmad described having given read: “God be my witness that I will not give the secrets of this secret society to anyone.”¹¹

The statement itself was included in a larger file of materials prepared for

the incoming police commissioner, Charles Tegart, detailing the history of an alleged network of secret societies in the north of Palestine responsible for a string of attacks against Jews. The handwritten note that introduces the file explicitly links these attacks with al-Qassam's secret organization, alleging that they were part of an "organized campaign of terror" against the Yishuv beginning in the wake of the 1929 *al-Burāq*/Wailing Wall riots.¹²

The extent to which al-Qassam was involved in the planning of the Nahalal bombing remains a mystery. 'Ali Ahmad's statement, and his known contact with other alleged conspirators in the bombing (namely Khalil Muhammad 'Issa), suggests that al-Qassam may have known about the plot, but accounts from the principal participants conflict on this point. What can be said, however, is that the bombing in 1932, and the subsequent trial the following year, came to epitomize the period between the 1929 riots and the revolt of 1936 in a number of important ways: it marked the first and most significant act of violent resistance to the Zionist project in northern Palestine, and it suggests a trajectory for 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam toward the type of violent anti-colonialism he practiced against the French in Syria a decade earlier. In the Nahalal plot, we find the center of the concentric circles of al-Qassam's constituency: the dispossessed, urban, slum-dwelling underclass; the villagers keen to protect land claims increasingly threatened by Zionist expansion in the north; the powerful margins of the burgeoning associational culture in mandate Palestine. Constituencies that helped propel Palestine on a path toward the revolt of 1936 became the core of a populist nationalism offering an alternative to the petitions of the traditional, quietist leadership.

■ At trial, 'Ali Ahmad tried to recant his confession and explained that he had been told by a mysterious Nazarene lawyer that 'Ali Ahmad's wife—who had been arrested at the same time as her husband—had been raped in prison. The conclusion was obvious to this lawyer: 'Ali Ahmad should confess everything he knew to get his wife out of jail.¹³

The trial shocked the Yishuv. This sensationalism peaked in July when the Crown presented details of the secret society. The most damning testimony on this matter would come from Sergeant Ahmad Naif, a policeman formerly based in Saffuriyya and rather inexplicably in attendance at these secretive meetings. Naif's testimony provided a reputable witness connecting all five accused.¹⁴

Another witness, Taha Ahmad Taha, elaborated on the secret society allegations, saying that the society was linked to the YMMA and was run by a number of shaykhs. Taha identified Shaykh Hamadi, Shaykh Za'rura, Gha-

layini, and 'Issa as having prominent roles in the Haifa YMMA. He said that meetings featured discussions of "wars" and "uprisings" and that the slogan "Muhammad's faith is to be propagated with the sword" was featured prominently. Just as 'Ali Ahmad had described, Taha claimed to have taken an oath in front of thirty others at one of the meetings to not "betray the society or reveal its secrets" and to have been recruited in Haifa because he spent a lot of time at the mosque and had been unemployed.¹⁵

The trial was a sensation. Witnesses for the prosecution included a known smuggler and a convicted perjurer. Other witnesses were assaulted outside of the courthouse. When the verdicts were finally read, one accused physically attacked another.

Those verdicts came on October 4. By early September the charges against Ahmad 'Abd al-Qadir and Ibrahim al-Hajj Khalil were dropped for lack of evidence. The same happened for Khalil 'Issa a few days before the judges rendered a majority verdict against Ghalayini and 'Ali Ahmad: guilty. "Since they have been found guilty the only point which can be raised at this stage with all reserve is this: This murder has been committed as a result of a bad policy enforced by the Government of this country," explained defense lawyer Hanna 'Asfur. Facing the likelihood that his clients were to be hanged, 'Asfur, a well-respected Christian Haifawi with nationalist connections, made a last-ditch attempt to sway the three-judge panel: "It is only unfortunate that the accused have adopted this illegal means in opposing Government policy. It may also be said that the accused wrongly understood the dictates of their religion. Under the circumstances this case is one in which the court should make a recommendation to His Excellency to exercise his power of prerogative, because it appears that neither accused was possessed of *the ordinary criminal intent*."¹⁶ The judges were unmoved by this line of argument and sentenced Ghalayini and 'Ali Ahmad to death. They were represented in their appeals by 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi, the cofounder of the Istiqlal Party in Haifa, but these appeals proved equally unsuccessful.

Less than a month before Ghalayini and 'Ali Ahmad were to be executed, the former's sentence was commuted to fifteen years of hard labor by High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope. 'Ali Ahmad—the only accused to have confessed—was hanged on Thursday, February 27, 1934. Ultimately, some Palestinians and Jews perceived the decision to hang 'Ali Ahmad, a fellow from a rural village, while commuting the sentence of Ghalayini, who operated a business in Haifa, as unfair.

The day that the charges against Khalil Muhammad 'Issa were dropped, he was rearrested. Along with Shaykh Hamadi, Shaykh Za'rura, Abdallah Kassab, and Diab Diwan, 'Issa was charged with "incitement to cause vio-

lence against the peaceful inhabitants of Palestine, and also sedition.”¹⁷ These were charges of membership in the secret society described in ‘Ali Ahmad’s confession and on the stand in the Nahalal trial by Taha Ahmad Taha and Inspector Ahmad Naif.

The evidence against the five was weak. Relying on contradictory testimony by paid police informants, the judge found that while the evidence cast the five accused in suspicion, it was not enough for a conviction, and he dismissed the charges.¹⁸

Though the contours of the secret societies are difficult to pin down, we know that they existed and that they committed attacks against communities in the Yishuv and eventually against British Mandate authorities and alleged Palestinian collaborators. It is difficult to deny that the investigation, prosecution, and general public outing of a secret society in the wake of the Nahalal murders influenced—less than three years later—the complexion of the Palestinian revolt in the north.

For instance, the revolt opened up the opportunity for a campaign of retribution, long thought to have been prosecuted by associates of al-Qassam’s, against Arab policemen—those connected to the investigation in particular. Ahmad Naif, the sergeant who testified to having been present at the secret Saffuriyya YMMA meetings and to ‘Issa’s and Ghalayini’s presence, was shot dead in al-Qassam’s village of Balad al-Shaykh in August 1936. So vilified was Naif that mosques throughout the area closed and refused to host a funeral for a man described as a “traitor.” Halim Basta—the crack investigator who was responsible for the arrests in the Nahalal case and who later led many investigations into armed groups in the north—was shot in the shoulder and neck on Khoury Street in Haifa in October 1936. He survived the attack but was shot again on Khoury Street six months after the first assassination attempt; this time he and his orderly were killed.¹⁹

The British brought Basta to Haifa from Egyptian Gaza to investigate the northern cells of the smaller guerilla organizations that became active in Palestine following the mass violence of 1929. Three organizations in particular are known to have been operating between 1929 and 1933. One group, al-Jihad al-Muqaddas (known by the British as “Holy War”), operated in the Jerusalem area during the years 1931–1934 under the command of ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni. While Husayni and al-Jihad al-Muqaddas would play a prominent role in the 1936–1939 Revolt and again in 1948, in the early 1930s the organization remained small.²⁰

Another group, known as the Green Hand Gang (al-Kaff al-Khadra), was active in the Acre-Safad-Nazareth area near the end of 1929 and, according to British intelligence, likely had connections to the YMMA in Safad, which

had been founded by Subhi al-Khadra. Armed with German and Turkish rifles, they “collected” monies from various villages in the north and called themselves “*mujahidin*.” The government was particularly concerned that the “Safad Gang” had been organized to test the administration’s response to such activities and took credit when the group was ultimately dispersed in the spring of 1930.²¹

While there are tenuous links between ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and the Green Hand Gang, it is clear that following the 1929 riots al-Qassam was involved in the recruitment and organization of other rebel groups in the north. The YMMA’s secret call for the creation of armed cells in 1930, as well as strong circumstantial evidence that al-Qassam’s mobility throughout the north of Palestine facilitated the spread of his message to smaller communities, suggests such a link. A number of sources claim that in 1930 al-Qassam sought and received further religious support for a potential violent confrontation in the form of a fatwa from a Damascene *‘ālim*, Shaykh Badr al-Din al-Hasani, approving of violent attacks against British and Jewish targets.²²

Shaykh al-Hasani was arguably one of the most well known of the inter-war Syrian *‘ulama’*. He offered spiritual counsel for resistance movements against the French following the war, and as *muḥaddith al-akbar* his knowledge of the sources of Islamic tradition carried a great deal of weight among his fellow scholars, such as al-Qassam. The fatwa was reportedly read by al-Qassam at gatherings of his followers, including the one detailed by Mustafa ‘Ali Ahmad in his “confession” and by Ahmad Naif and Taha on the witness stand at the Nahalal trials.²³

The third group, which we now know was the one involved in the Nahalal bombing, was the Black Hand (al-Kaff al-Aswad). While al-Qassam’s name was mentioned in the Nahalal proceedings, despite the connection between the Black Hand and the Saffuriyya YMMA branch, al-Qassam was never charged for his association with the secret society. One explanation that persists comes from Subhi Yasin, who reports that the members of the Black Hand who carried out attacks in the north did so against al-Qassam’s wishes. Yet al-Qassam had, after all, been preaching and lecturing on the merits of jihad and calling for the secret arming and training of YMMA members after the association agreed on such a program in 1930.²⁴

Among these groups in northern Palestine, his experience in Syria fighting the French would have been experience few others had. What we may be more able to assert is that in 1932 al-Qassam thought the conditions were not yet present for armed confrontation or that his associates were unprepared for the type of guerilla campaign he had in mind. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest that following the Nahalal bombings the leader-

ship of the Haifa YMMA may have tried to rein in branches that appeared to be moving too quickly toward revolt. One British intelligence report warns that the YMMA leadership was increasing its activity in the villages and that there was “little doubt that this party aims at organizing and asserting control over these associations, which would become a dangerous weapon in its hands.”²⁵ The police were clearly concerned that the Haifa leadership was further mobilizing branches in the north for actions like those of the Saffuriyya branch, yet in trying to assert *more* control over the associations, their actions could also be read in reverse: that the Nahalal bombing and the operations of the Black Hand, the Saffuriyya YMMA, and Khalil Muhammad ‘Issa were a phenomenon that al-Qassam and Ibrahim wanted to control.

Regardless of the degree to which al-Qassam was involved in the planning or execution of the Nahalal bombing, the event was a watershed in the evolution of violent resistance to the British and Zionist colonization of Palestine. Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim called the Nahalal bombing the “first revolutionary experience” (*tajriba thawriyya*) in mandate Palestine.²⁶ Not long after Nahalal, the mandate authorities banned the YMMAs in Palestine and placed Ibrahim, al-Khadra, and al-Qassam—as the leaders of the organization in the north—under heavy surveillance.

Nevertheless, it seems al-Qassam continued to organize small cells of followers around Haifa, often meeting with them in Wadi Salib or in caves outside of the city. Men associated with the YMMA, men with whom al-Qassam had interacted as imam at al-Jarina and al-Istiqlal, and men al-Qassam had met while visiting villages as *madhūn* joined his organization. Criminals whom al-Qassam called back to Islam also joined the group. Hasan al-Bayir, a hashish smuggler, recounted his early time with al-Qassam in the newspaper *Filastin*: “I used to steal and commit sins. Then came the late Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, who led me and taught me to pray. He forbade me from acting against Islamic law that is God almighty. . . . [H]e took me to the Balqis mountain and he gave me a gun and I asked ‘what is this?’ He answered: ‘to train with it and fight jihad [*tujāhid*] with your brothers for God [*fi sabīl Allah*].’”²⁷

In the early 1930s, when al-Qassam and Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir were organizing the secret cells of the Black Hand, initiates into the group were required to have a current member vouch for them. They were often surveilled by members of the group, and the ultimate decision to accept a candidate into their ranks was al-Qassam’s prerogative. We also know from Mustafa ‘Ali Ahmad’s interrogation that initiates into al-Qassam’s organization were required to give an oath of secrecy. This makes the exact number of fighters

in al-Qassam's organization between the years 1930 and 1934 difficult to confirm.²⁸

But al-Qassam's message was spreading. Moshe Dayan, whose father had been one of the founders of Nahalal and who was likely present at the *moshav* at the time of the Yaacobi bombing, visited Saffuriyya shortly afterward. There he recounts that he spoke with men in the village he had considered friends:

They all spoke of adulation of the Kassamiya, saying they were devoted idealists, humble in their ways, spending much time at prayer, and acting out of deep religious and national principles. . . . The Kassamiya, and above all the esteem in which they were held by the Arab peasants and the Bedouins who lived side by side with us, clarified one aspect of the relations between us. . . . The emergence of the Kassamiya shed light on the deep national and religious chasm that separated the Arabs from the Jews who were fulfilling the ideals of Zionism.²⁹

■ In September 1933 the body of King Faysal of Iraq, who had died a week earlier while in Switzerland for medical testing, arrived by boat in Haifa. The vehicle carrying the corpse of the former commander of the Arab Revolt drove along the Kingsway through Wadi Salib, past the doors of al-Istiqlal Mosque to the rail station that lay on the other side of the square, where a train would take his body home. Despite many Palestinians' ambivalence toward Faysal, huge crowds turned out to witness the procession as it made the two-mile drive. A number of leaders of the pan-Arab Istiqlal Party accompanied the body on its final overland journey to Iraq and endorsed the ascension of Faysal's son Ghazi to the throne in Baghdad.³⁰

For some, then, the urgency of a united Arab state was brought home by the passing of the movement's most likely head. For people such as Izzat Darwaza and 'Awni 'Abd al-Hadi, this was a moment in which sympathy for their cause came up against the reality that they no longer had an obvious figurehead with a natural (however problematic) claim to power. On the other hand, dying with Faysal in Switzerland was the sense among many Palestinians that a united Arab state, or in the very least a Greater Syrian one, was even feasible.

That fall of 1933 was a busy period in Haifa. The trial of the Nahalal bombers ended with Ghalayini's and 'Ali Ahmad's guilty verdicts in October. Though the former's sentence was commuted, 'Ali Ahmad was hanged from the gallows in the Acre prison the following winter. While there had been

riots and outcry over the deaths of the three convicted for their participation in the 1929 violence, there was little such outcry over 'Ali Ahmad's fate. The "first nationalist moment" (as Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim had described it) passed with few people noticing. Instead of giving pause to the settlement of Jews in northern Palestine, the bombing seemed to have had little impact.³¹

In the first eight months of 1933, sixteen thousand Jews fled Europe because conditions in Palestine seemed more promising than those on the continent. The Nazi *Machtergreifung*—the party's seizure of power in Germany at the end of January—presaged a frightful few months that culminated in the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses in April and the beginning of the party's anti-Semitic national policies. The influx of Europe's Jews outpaced that of the previous years by a considerable margin; the increase hardly passed unnoticed by Palestinians. The Arabic press continued to challenge the timidity of the Palestinian leadership, and in response the Arab Executive declared a general strike for October 13. Unchecked Jewish immigration, British inertia on the question of self-governance, and more conflict over the holy sites in Jerusalem all came together in October 1933 to turn Palestine, once again, into a tinderbox.³²

■ At 7:15 p.m. on October 27, 1933, two thousand Palestinians amassed outside al-Istiqlal Mosque and listened as speakers recounted what they had seen of events in Jaffa. Earlier that day, fifteen Palestinians had been gunned down by British police, including a six-year-old bystander, amid demonstrations against the mandate. The crowd at the mosque then marched westward, toward the police barracks. Warnings from District Superintendent of Police Gerald Foley that a firing squad would be deployed were met with a barrage of rocks and debris. In the melee over the next two days, four Haifawis were killed.³³

What set the 1933 riots apart from those of 1929 was the fact that nearly all of the frustration was directed at the British, not the Yishuv. While Jewish cars were stopped and burned, nearly all of the violence in Haifa took place around the police barracks. Young men led the 1933 riots, politically active and, with the advent of the YMMAs and youth congresses throughout Palestine, better mobilized. In Haifa, Nablus, and Jaffa, the nationalist youth movement became the vanguard of Palestinian anti-colonialism, and in the north, where these youth movements were particularly strong, deteriorating economic conditions that the British Mandate government seemed unable or unwilling to address exacerbated the animosity felt toward the colonial powers.

What really fueled the antagonism, then—beyond the clashes between

Palestinians, Jews, and the British administration that made headlines around the world—were the daily indignities of colonial rule. In Haifa, economic migration and landlessness, insufficient housing, and underdevelopment were the daily realities of life for the vast majority of the city's residents. The colonial policies of the 1930s made matters worse.

This was particularly the case when Edward Keith-Roach took over as commissioner for the northern district in September 1931. Keith-Roach had earned a reputation as the “best tax administrator” in the mandate, managing government collections in Jerusalem over the previous half decade. When he took over the northern district, practices that had previously gone unpunished by the administration were no longer allowed to continue. He was “merciless” in pursuit of landlords who owed tax arrears and, with the Municipal Corporation Ordinance of 1934, brought a new taxation scheme that forced landlords to increase rents, leading to a spike in homelessness in Haifa. The same law empowered Keith-Roach to replace and dismiss whole municipal councils or their individual members, and it dramatically increased the control the British administrators held over the city's finances. Over the course of the year, the mandate authority reported that there had been twenty newly installed municipal councils “elected” in Palestine. Both the Palestinians and the Yishuv strongly resented these elections, the newly established powers that brought them about, and the control the British authorities now exercised over municipal budgets. The Palestine government proceeded to dismiss these concerns as “local jealousies,” and in doing so it seemed to be turning a blind eye to the practical damage some of its policies were causing.³⁴

In reality, the British were in a quandary they were incapable of navigating. The high commissioner for Palestine, Arthur Grenfell Wachope, was aware that the situation in Palestine was deteriorating. In December 1934 he wrote to the secretary of state for the colonies that, with a fifth of Palestinians now landless and the unemployment rate increasing, dissatisfaction with the government was increasing “day after day.”³⁵

■ This period following the 1929 riots saw the rapid urbanization of Haifa and the proletarianization of northern Palestine's fellahin. In the rat-infested, tin-hut slums of Wadi Salib and Ard al-Raml, young Palestinian men disaffected by the protean political, economic, and social problems looked somewhere for a source to give voice to their complaints. The traditional Palestinian leadership in Jerusalem was unwilling—and increasingly unable—to address the root causes of these problems. Instead, from the mosque's *kuttāb* came a thundering voice who argued that the cause of

the problems facing Palestine were not, in fact, unique to Palestine: colonialism — Italian, French, British, and Zionist — was afflicting Muslim lands long before the end of the Ottoman Empire. Yet alongside the problem of colonialism, al-Qassam placed issues internal to the *umma* in the foreground. Drawing on Salafi ideas of a return to a purer, unadulterated faith, al-Qassam turned his rhetoric into a discourse of self-improvement. If Haifawis took their duties as Muslims seriously — if they lived their lives with a moral code born of Islam's most sincere and earliest precept — they could shrug off the European presence in their homeland.

This message was delivered by al-Qassam at al-Burj Islamic School from 1921 to 1924 in classrooms full of boys; in meetings with boilermakers and locomotive mechanics in workshops and homes in Wadi Salib; over wedding meals in villages such as al-Mazar between 1929 and 1933 with his daughters, Maymana, Khadija, and 'A'isha, and his son, Muhammad, at his side; and in meetings small and large of the Young Men's Muslim Association.

Some also heard al-Qassam preach the merits of jihad and saw a new avenue to fight against the British and Zionist colonization of Palestine. The 1932 Nahalal bombing marked a dramatic turn toward concentrated acts of violent anti-colonial resistance. While the police crackdown that followed in the initial aftermath of the bombing dispersed whatever organizational structure had been put in place, the spark had been struck, and many of these same men would come back together in the coming years to follow their shaykh on a new campaign. The three-year interval between the Black Hand's offensive, which Abu Ibrahim claims carried out twenty-five "operations," and the fall of 1935 was a gradual accumulation of humiliations for Haifawis that eventually, one historian writes, prompted "the shaykh to go back to work."³⁶

On November 2, 1935, al-Qassam appeared onstage in Haifa alongside the president of the Palestine Arab Party (the mufti's party), Jamal al-Husayni, to denounce the Balfour Declaration on its eighteenth anniversary. The meeting approved a proclamation that warned Christians and Muslims of the world about the danger that Britain's lack of movement on the Jewish immigration issue posed to the Christian and Muslim holy sites. It was a proclamation not unlike the dozens that had come before it, such as the *bayān* issued by the Haifa Islamic Society shortly after al-Qassam's initial arrival in Haifa in 1921. The 1935 occasion did, however, include reference to the recently discovered attempt (presumably by members of the Jewish underground) to smuggle weapons into Palestine. Three weeks earlier a cache of twenty-five Lewis guns and their bipods were discovered in a cement shipment in Jaffa harbor. The discovery triggered an outcry from Palestinian

Arabs, who believed they had been given proof of something many had long assumed: that Jewish paramilitary units were arming for confrontation.³⁷

Although he was under “general supervision” by the police, sometime following the conclusion of that meeting, al-Qassam and a small group of his disciples disappeared from Haifa into the wadis and hamlets of northern Palestine.³⁸

With the Qur'an as a Passport

As the Yishuv accumulated land throughout Palestine—to an unprecedented level in the north—they continued to develop the institutions of a nation-state, both overtly in the form of the Jewish Agency and its various functions and covertly with the paramilitary Haganah and its militant offshoot Irgun. The widely held suspicion that Jewish paramilitary forces were smuggling arms into Palestine was confirmed when weapons were uncovered in the port of Jaffa on October 16, 1935. What's more, many Palestinians believed that the discovery in Jaffa was only the tip of an iceberg: that the Haganah and Irgun had been importing weapons since at least 1929, and that those weapons would one day be turned on the Palestinians themselves.¹

The crisis precipitated by the discovery of the weapons once again brought together the traditional factions of Palestinian nationalists in a public way. Jointly, they submitted petitions to the high commissioner requesting a freeze on immigration and the disarming of Jewish settlements. Like many such petitions, they went nowhere. The Palestinian press continued to attack the leadership for their ineffective entreaties.

At some point that fall, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam probed his longtime confidant Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim for his thoughts on an armed revolution. Al-Qassam likely did so in an oblique manner—at least at first—since al-Hajj Ibrahim writes clearly in his memoir that al-Qassam's exit from Haifa was a surprise. 'Ajaj Nuwayhid confirmed in his own memoirs that al-Hajj Ibrahim received a farewell letter from al-Qassam sometime in November. It read, in part: "I am confident in myself and my voice will resonate everywhere with the first cry. We entrust you to God and ask him for help in our work for the sake of the homeland." We can surmise from his own description of the events that al-Hajj Ibrahim was at best lukewarm to the idea.²

So too, it seems, was Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, from whom al-Qassam next sought counsel. Early one morning, after the dawn prayers, Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir met with al-Qassam in a room at the mosque. After initial reluctance to proffer his opinion on starting the revolt, he asked the shaykh about the number of men and their weapons. "We have fifteen," the shaykh responded. "And ammunition?" "For each rifle, we have a cartridge."

Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir believed that the time was not right. "You want to make a revolution with gunpowder and a cartridge? We cannot stand in the face of the English. The revolution needs weapons and money, and the revolution needs supplies every day, and it has expenses every day. But do we have all this?" Al-Qassam explained his reasoning: "We are not leaving to start the revolution right away, with battles immediately. We're leaving because we've talked about this a long time — people must see that we do what we say we'll do."

Despite his reservations, Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir nevertheless supported the shaykh's final decision. In the end, it is hard to say how much of the demurral, hesitation, and "surprise" that Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim and Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir expressed around the shaykh's decision to take to the hills was genuine, or the product of hindsight. Perhaps, too, there was some reluctance to acknowledge their role in encouraging such a fateful decision.³

Lastly, al-Qassam spoke with his wife, Amina, for whom this discussion had surely not come as a total surprise. Their eldest daughter, Maymana, reported that in the weeks before he decided to leave Haifa for good, her father had appeared agitated and restless. Maymana seems to have been aware of what 'Izz al-Din was contemplating, and she reportedly challenged him on whether violent confrontation with the British would achieve the goal they both clearly shared. He responded with a proverb: "Shame is in bearing the dog's bite, not the lion's." When her father left their home in Balad al-Shaykh for the final time, his family had likely grown anxious about his behavior. "Who are you going to see?" Amina asked her husband as he left. "God almighty" was his response.⁴

The descriptions of al-Qassam's final few days in Haifa are contradictory and perhaps romanticized in later accounts. Take, for instance, the recollections concerning his last sermon at al-Istiqlal Mosque before he left the city. It was reportedly based on the fourteenth verse of the ninth chapter of the Qur'an, which reads: "Will you not fight against those who have broken their oaths and conspired to banish the Apostle? They were the first to attack you. Do you fear them? Surely God is more deserving of your fear, if you are true believers." Al-Qassam was reminding a congregation that, in the scheme of things, the British police were not to be feared. "Dear people," he began,

"I have taught you that religion matters until you all know it, and I taught you that country matters and you should practice jihad." Leaning on the *minbar*, he continued: "I've told you—and may God bear witness—you have to *struggle*. You have to *struggle*." The witnesses reported that his final sermon reduced those in al-Istiqlal to tears. They "kissed his hands and promised that they would conduct a jihad" for the country. He left in a waiting car.⁵

It is not easy to accept that al-Qassam was this open about his plans in such an environment. Qassamite Ibrahim al-Shaykh Khalil describes an urgency in al-Qassam in those final days, saying the shaykh feared that the surveillance would get too close and spoil the opportunity for revolution. There is strong evidence that he was generally secretive and evasive with even his closest associates, citing on more than one occasion the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad: "Resort to secrecy when conducting your affairs." Paid collaborators regularly monitored his sermons at al-Istiqlal, reporting their contents to the British police. If he was as transparent in his plans as these narratives suggest, his flight from Haifa would likely have been stopped before he made it past the Wadi Rushmiyya bridge.⁶

■ He was right to have worried about collaborators in his midst. Later, there was a great deal of speculation about the villagers in the Marj area where the Qassamites set up camp early in their revolt and what sort of help the villagers had provided to the police. Along with the men from al-Istiqlal who reported on al-Qassam's sermons, it seems evident that he was under particularly close surveillance beginning in the late 1920s.

Indeed, British documents reveal that one of al-Qassam's closest associates was a paid informant. In May 1931, following the murder of three Jews in the Yajur settlement near Balad al-Shaykh, the Criminal Investigation Department of the Palestine Police authorized a series of payments for information on the "Political Murder Gangs" in Haifa. For five hundred Palestinian pounds, the informant was to provide "[full] details of the political murder gangs organized by the YMMA in Haifa. To include such information as will lead to the seizure of the arms of the organization and documentary evidence of its existence." If the informant could provide information on the organization outside of Haifa, that, too, would net him £500. Details on the Yajur murders were worth £2,000, while links between the YMMA, other Arab associations, and other cases paid much less. This investigation targeted the Haifa YMMA during al-Qassam's tenure as president. The CID's informant was the Haifa YMMA's executive leader and cofounder, Ramzi 'Amr.⁷

Concern over collaborators and possible arrest may have been so acute that it contributed to al-Qassam's decision to leave. Ibrahim Shaykh Khalil,

in a letter published in *Shu'un Filastiniyya* in 1982, recounted that the shaykh's fears of an impending arrest hastened his departure. Khalil wrote that al-Qassam was concerned that the British were preparing to arrest the "righteous elite" among his group and thus "thwart all of the revolutionary plans before they reached the citizens."⁸

In those final days, al-Qassam had one of his men send five rifles to a group of his followers in Saffuriyya that included Nahalal conspirators Ahmad al-Tawbah and members of the Za'rura family, with orders to wait for further instructions from the shaykh.⁹

On the night of November 12, 1935, al-Qassam and some of his associates met in the home of Mahmud Salim al-Makhzumi, where they discussed the shaykh's decision to leave Haifa and head for the area north of Jenin, in the Jabal Faqu'a mountain range. The plan seems to have been to head for the hills and to roam the villages in the Marj Ibn 'Amr (the Lower Galilee), urging villagers to buy weapons and be prepared for a revolution. Al-Makhzumi was a Qassamite originally from that area: the village of Zar'in, five miles north of Jenin in the Esdraelon Valley. He was also a member of the Qassamite cell responsible for "political communications" (*tṣālāt al-siyāsiya*), which Subhi Yasin says put him in touch with the Italian Consulate in Jerusalem and the Turks in the hope of financing the purchase of new weapons.¹⁰

Yasin argues that this structure of loosely connected cells is really al-Qassam's great organizational achievement. They operated independently of each other, possibly without knowledge of those in other cells, on discrete tasks. Hassan al-Bayir and Nimr al-Sa'di were charged with buying weapons from smugglers. At the first trial of the Qassamites, one man testified that al-Bayir had tried to buy a German gun from him for three and a half pounds. Al-Bayir had been a hashish dealer and smuggler before hearing al-Qassam's call back to Islam, while al-Sa'di had connections to Bedouin gun smugglers from the Transjordan. Procuring such weapons—typically Ottoman-era Turkish and British long guns—was still a difficult endeavor, but this experience was lacking among most of the Qassamites.¹¹

There was a unit for religious guidance led by Kamil al-Qassab, and another unit tasked with spying on the British administration and Jewish organizations. However, it is unlikely that much useful information was gleaned from the work of those such as Naji Abu Zayd who worked in the civil service or beside Jews in various Haifa industries.

Another cell was responsible for the military preparedness of the Qassamites. Both Subhi Yasin and Jewish intelligence documents in the Central Zionist Archives attest to the presence of a Turkish Army officer among the Qassamites as they conducted weapons training in the Marj Ibn 'Amr. Ac-

cording to the report to the Political Department of the Jewish Agency of Haganah intelligence officer Aaron Cohen, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim and Subhi al-Khadra were directly involved in despatching Hassan al-Bayir to Turkey to try and recruit the officer, who is said to have been involved in a number of campaigns, including Faysal's brief stand against the French and the Turkish War of Independence alongside Mustafa Kemal. Al-Hajj Ibrahim's involvement in this aspect of al-Qassam's organization seems unlikely—and could be an attempt on Cohen's part to implicate him further in the military aspects of al-Qassam's movement—but al-Khadra had served in the Ottoman Army in Syria, was in Faysal's camp, and likely had such contacts in the Turkish Army.¹²

This officer was responsible for leading the Qassamites in military training and received a small salary for his work. And yet almost no Qassamite sources speak of a Turkish officer's presence among the group. Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, on the other hand, identifies Muhammad Abu 'Ayun, a member of the Palestine Police, as the Qassamite charged with the group's weapons training. Ultimately, it may have been that the few men who had some military training, such as Farhan al-Sa'di and al-Qassam himself, were responsible for getting the group ready for rebellion.¹³

All of these cells were working toward a set of loosely defined goals that al-Qassam's rebellion hoped to achieve. They included the obvious: the removal of the mandate and the withdrawal of British colonial authority from Palestine. This goal would ultimately solve the issue of the Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration and would bring about Palestinian independence.

How al-Qassam thought he would achieve this remains unclear. A number of sources suggest that his plan was not to declare a revolt immediately, but to continue to train his men in the Jabal Faqqu'a area while recruiting more men into his organization from among the villages of the Marj Ibn 'Amr and west of Jenin. According to Qassamite 'Arabi Badawi, this period of intense preparation would have been followed by an attack on Haifa. And once Haifa had fallen, the hope was that the momentum would turn in the rebels' favor and a flood of recruits would bolster their ranks and propel them to victory and independence. This was a string of optimistic outcomes built upon optimistic outcomes.¹⁴

It seems that al-Qassam took a great deal of inspiration from the other anti-colonial rebellions throughout the Arab world during the 1920s and 1930s—in particular the "Great Syrian revolt" of 1925–1927 and the exploits of 'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi in the Moroccan Rif between 1920 and 1926. Al-Khattabi used guerilla tactics in a mountainous region to fight against both

Spanish and French forces. Of course, al-Qassam himself had learned many lessons from his own time in Jabal Sahyun fighting the French. These largely unsuccessful insurgencies could offer al-Qassam lessons on how to defeat a colonial power. But northern Palestine was neither Jabal Sahyun nor the Rif. While al-Qassam thought himself prepared for a campaign against a colonial power, other circumstances beyond his control would intervene.¹⁵

■ The initial period in the hills seems to have gone according to plan and surely reminded al-Qassam of the Jabal Sahyun campaign in 1920. However, here he had spent years recruiting a small band of between thirty and fifty men he felt were committed wholly to the cause. He carefully avoided making some of the mistakes he had made a decade and a half earlier. There were no landowning *mujahidin* among his ranks, hence less cause for concern about the class-based *fitna* that had plagued him in Syria. British intelligence summarized his group as being “from the poor, the ignorant, and the more violently disposed of the pious.” Al-Qassam described it differently in an apocryphal interview published in *Filastin* after his death: “Look, my hair has turned white,” al-Qassam is reported to have said, relying on a Levantine idiom. “I have a lot of experience which made me hope for something good from peasants and workers.” These peasants and workers were more religious, putting their trust in God and believing in “Heaven and the Day of Judgment.” For al-Qassam, the link between class, faith, and his mission was clear: “Whoever has these qualities is more likely to sacrifice, and is more daring to go forward. . . . [He] is able to endure difficulties and is stronger.” Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir estimated that of the forty initial members of the Qassamite organization, thirty-six were from rural peasant roots.¹⁶

In his memoirs, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim describes the requirements placed on candidates recruited into the organization. The applicant should be “committed to the provisions of the faith in both word and deed; stand himself in the service of his religion and country; implement the orders of his superiors without question or hesitation.” To these conditions of conscience, they added a practical caveat: the recruit had to “acquire a weapon and train in its use.” This last point—an echo of al-Qassam’s days of self-sufficiency selling sweets in Cairo—may not have been rigorously enforced, the acquisition of weapons being a particularly challenging obstacle during the mandate.¹⁷

Weapons training was conducted in the vicinity of the villages of al-Mazar and Nuris, five and a half miles northeast of Jenin. These villages afforded a small guerilla movement some benefits, most notably that they lay on the western tip of the Jabal Faqu’a mountain range that ran southeast from

Nuris toward the Jabal Jenin Mountains and the Jordan River Valley, which served as both a source of arms and a possible escape route out of Palestine. The Nuris and al-Mazar area was also the home of Farhan al-Sa'di.¹⁸

Farhan al-Sa'di was born in al-Mazar in the 1850s and, despite his advanced age, served in the Ottoman Army during the First World War. Husni Jarar, a biographer of both al-Qassam and al-Sa'di, suggests in his biography of the latter that the two men first met in Syria during the Allied invasion. In 1932, al-Qassam reconnected with al-Sa'di, who was tall and sported a long white beard, after his release from Acre prison, where he had been jailed for convictions stemming from the 1929 riots. Al-Sa'di became a regular at al-Qassam's Friday sermons at al-Istiqlal. They discussed politics together and agreed to work in unison against British and Zionist colonization of Palestine. Some of their meetings occurred in the Nuris and al-Mazar area, to which al-Sa'di frequently returned.¹⁹

This area, like much of the Marj Ibn 'Amr more broadly, was some of the most contentious land in all of Palestine. The plain north of Jabal Faqu'a (also variously known as the Lower Galilee, the Jezreel Valley, and the Esdraelon plain) stretched from the Carmel mountain range and the Bay of Haifa in the west to the Jordan River valley in the east. It had the most picturesque and fertile land in Palestine, but its residents had, for three decades, faced the twin threats of absentee, distant landlords and colonization.²⁰

Writing in 1886, the Christian Zionist Laurence Oliphant described the area as being in the "highest state of cultivation." "It looks today," he continued, "like a huge green lake of waving wheat, with its village-crowned mounds rising from it like islands; and it presents one of the most striking pictures of luxuriant fertility which it is possible to conceive." In support for his argument that Zionist expansion should concentrate on this particular valley, Oliphant goes on to describe the fortuitous fact that almost all of the land was owned by "two great proprietors, the Sultan himself . . . and the Sursuks, the richest bankers in Syria."²¹

Like much of northern Palestine, some of the village lands of Nuris had been sold by the Sursuqs in 1921 to the Palestine Land Development Company. In fact, this area suffered from levels of tenant eviction higher than most during the mandate. Of the roughly 400,000 metric dunams of land in the valley identified in the Hope Simpson report, nearly half of it was sold to Zionist development institutions between 1920 and 1925. The Sursuq deal that saw Nuris land sold for Jewish settlement would be the initial site of Kibbutz Ein Harod and the future home of the "Special Night Squads," a paramilitary force that carried out a murderous counterinsurgency campaign in the 1936–1939 Revolt. That transaction left people dispossessed and

caused “over twenty villages” in the area to be depopulated. This naturally led to hostility between the dispossessed and the colonizers. Years later, testimony at the Hope Simpson inquiry would describe the still acute “soreness” owing to the sale, which was “evident on every occasion of discussion with the Arabs, both effendi and fellahin.” So fraught were the politics of this valley that in the 1940s, nearing the end of the mandate, the United Nations proposed a partition plan that would have severed the area into four, with the Palestinians taking territory north and south of the “X,” and the Jewish state taking territory east and west. This is where al-Qassam believed his rebellion would start.²²

■ It was Farhan al-Sa'di who suggested that the group do their military training in al-Mazar. He knew the terrain around the villages well and hid weapons in caves in the hills. He was also highly respected by the neighboring communities and gained their support, which he hoped would later translate into recruits for al-Qassam's organization. When al-Sa'di joined the group, he was put into a leadership position in the military wing, relying on the valuable experience he had gained fighting the British in Syria during the war. Very few of al-Qassam's men in the early period seem to have had much experience fighting. Al-Sa'di is reported to have been particularly interested in the group's weapons discipline—in conserving the little quality ammunition they had access to. Running out of ammunition may have been one of the issues that al-Qassam had dealt with in Syria in 1920; this problem was particularly acute by the mid 1930s, when Ottoman-era weapons were still the most available option. Certainly, faulty ammunition plagued rebels well into the 1936–1939 Revolt, when anecdotal evidence suggests that repeated misfires were common.²³

Farhan al-Sa'di may have also held important financial functions within the organization. Money remained a primary concern in the group, and al-Qassam encouraged his disciples to be independent and to acquire their own weapons. This was something of a barrier to joining for many of the men, who were forced to sell personal goods such as furniture and their wives' jewelry in order to afford the illicit weapons. In the case of Shaykh 'Attiya of Balad al-Shaykh, it required some legal wrangling: in 1935 he and his lawyer, Hanna Naqqara, a Christian with nationalist leanings who lived in the eastern neighborhoods of Haifa, brought a lawsuit over a land dispute. 'Attiya claimed that some of his land had been illegally appropriated. The accused offered multiple amends but 'Attiya refused them all until, as Naqqara recounts it in his memoirs, he abruptly changed his mind and conceded the land for £130. When it became apparent that al-Qassam, along with 'Attiya,

had taken to the hills in the hope of starting a revolt, Naqqara understood that Attiya's decision to relinquish his claim to the land was connected to the pressing demand of financing a revolt.²⁴

This pressure to find money and weapons was significant. While northern Palestine has been described as being awash in smuggled weapons, that seems to have been exaggerated or, at the very least, those weapons were not as easily accessible as it might seem. Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, speaking in an interview years later, recalled how getting money and weapons was the group's primary concern: "The Jews bring weapons and they kill us and they control the land. There are clashes against us and killing of our people. Everyone knows this." He continued, "Our concern was to buy and to find weapons for *al-Qassamiyīn* [the Qassamites] in order to defend ourselves . . . because the job is either to get weapons or what can be used as weapons. There is nothing for us *al-Qassamiyīn* but this situation and this view."²⁵

Fighters purchased weapons from smugglers who brought the guns in from Turkey, Syria, or the Transjordan—or they were stolen. Tahqla Faris of Umm al-Fahm recalled one episode involving her two brothers, Ahmad and 'Ali, who worked as bus company guards in Haifa. In 1936 they lived in the Wadi Rushmiyya neighborhood in east Haifa, next to the Hajj 'Abdallah Mosque. One day her seventeen-year-old brother called her out to the front of their home. "It was the hottest part of the day," she recalled; the "sun was so fierce that it even dazzled the birds' eyes, and the street was empty except for one British soldier who was patrolling the street." Ahmad struck the soldier with a stick his sister had decorated for him. With the soldier unconscious, Ahmad took his gun and retreated back into the home. Two days later Ahmad returned to the home to retrieve the gun, which he had stashed in the toilet, telling his sister that he was leaving for "the mountains."²⁶

Al-Qassam, too, contributed financially where he could. Like his men, he sold personal belongings in order to buy weapons for the cause. Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, echoing Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim's earlier concerns about the financial health of the al-Qassam family, notes that the shaykh lived a modest existence and that his jobs as *khaṭīb* and *madhūn* kept him from living a "high life."²⁷

The requirement for recruits to provide their own weapons created a culture of self-sufficiency among the Qassamites. For however long they were in the hills, al-Qassam's group was rarely seen and the members were reported to have carried out some small-scale sabotage, limited mostly to destroying phone lines and disrupting transportation. The plan seems to have been to remain under the police's radar while raising recruits for an impending revolt. The shooting of Sergeant Rosenfeld upset this plan.²⁸

■ After al-Makhzumi fired the two shots that killed Rosenfeld, al-Qassam quickly turned to his companions and told them to pack their belongings, saying, "The army will be here soon."

Accounts after the fact by surviving Qassamites conflict about whether the initial ambush of Rosenfeld was intentional. Jewish sources reported that the group planned to ambush villagers from Kibbutz HaHugim, a kibbutz under the supervision of the Histadrut that manufactured clothing, but that the attempt to lure the settlers out of the kibbutz failed. Nevertheless, al-Qassam wasted no time in having his men pack their belongings and make a hasty retreat. They immediately headed west, along the Jabal Faqqu'a ridge toward the villages of Nuris and al-Mazar, near where they had been training in the previous weeks.²⁹

The Palestine Police arrived on the scene of Rosenfeld's killing later that morning. The death of a policeman at this point in the mandate was an unusual and troubling event, and many policemen were dispatched from as far south as Jerusalem.³⁰ The colonial authorities brought the fullest might of the state down upon the residents of the neighboring villages. In questioning, the police learned the identities of some of the group. Jewish intelligence files indicate that one of the villagers under interrogation stated that the police should instead "go to Haifa and conduct your investigation among the group whose leader is Shaykh 'Izz al-Din." Other villagers were paid to help or coerced into helping the police track al-Qassam's group on their westward flight.³¹ Once word spread to police in towns and villages in the north, known associates of al-Qassam were brought in for interrogation. Yusuf Abu Durra, who became a leading Qassamite rebel during the coming revolt, was among those arrested. Abu Durra had come into contact with al-Qassam when he worked as a laborer at the Haifa oil terminal and the railroad workshop behind al-Istiqlal Mosque, but he had not been among the initial group of rebels to leave the city.

With the police on their tail, al-Qassam's group zigged and zagged across the Jabal Faqqu'a ridge, then over the southern reaches of the Marj Ibn 'Amr Valley, before reaching the less densely covered hills northwest of the town of Jenin. Ten days after the shooting of Rosenfeld, they once again came into contact with the Palestine Police, this time outside of the village of al-Barid, less than a dozen miles west of their initial camp. In the ensuing gunfight, Abu al-Qasim Khalaf, a beverage peddler from Hebron, was the first Qassamite to be killed.³²

At this point al-Qassam made the fateful decision to split the group in two. Farhan al-Sa'di took one group and headed north and east, ostensibly toward the Transjordanian frontier, where al-Sa'di had good connections

to Bedouin arms smugglers. The other group, of about a dozen men, stayed with their shaykh.³³

After Khalaf's death, the police flooded into the triangle of villages west and north of Jenin. There they surrounded the villages of Ya'bad, al-Yamun, Burqin, and Kfar Dan. The blockade at al-Yamun, Kfar Dan, and Burqin, three villages that formed a chain north of the scene of the battle, forced al-Qassam and his men south and west, toward Ya'bad. For three days, al-Qassam and his men hid in the caves and forested shallow wadis north of Ya'bad, and among local sympathizers who offered them shelter. There they continued to practice the rituals to which they had become accustomed over the previous few weeks. They gathered in a circle and discussed religion. They prayed. They must have known that the dragnet was growing tighter around them and that the outcome looked grim; they must have discussed martyrdom (*istishhād*).³⁴

On the morning of November 20, the Palestine Police moved toward the small hamlet of Nazlat Shaykh Zayd, just north of Ya'bad, in an effort to prevent any reinforcements from reaching al-Qassam's group. Farhan al-Sa'di and the second group of Qassamites had reportedly turned back toward central Palestine, but these reinforcements were too late. That morning, al-Qassam and his men were in the wadi al-Trim a few hundred meters north of Nazlat Shaykh Zayd when one of their scouts reported that the police were moving in.³⁵

In those moments, al-Qassam is reported to have said a number of things to his men. He instructed them to "fight to the last drop of blood." One Palestinian newspaper reported that after being told by an Arab policeman to surrender, he shouted in reply: "We won't turn ourselves in! This is a holy war for God and the homeland!" before facing his compatriots and telling them to "die a martyr's death." Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim was told that "O' Qur'an! O' Muhammad! O' Arabs!" was al-Qassam's battle cry.³⁶

The ensuing gunfight lasted at least three hours and possibly as long as eight. It was likely short—the Qassamites had limited ammunition and the location they were holding at the time was not easily defensible. Al-Masri and Sa'id were shot and killed. Shaykh Nimr al-Sa'di, one of al-Qassam's lieutenants, was seriously wounded, as were As'ad Mifleh and Hassan al-Bayir. British Police Constable R. C. Mott was killed in the exchange of fire, and Constable Frank Reeder lay wounded. At some point in the fighting, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam moved from behind cover and was shot in the forehead.³⁷

■ With the shot that felled al-Qassam, the battle came to an end. Villagers emerged from their nearby homes to carry 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's body on

their shoulders up the hill to the small shrine in Nazlat Shaykh Zayd, where it stayed under the watch of Abdallah al-Salim, the village mukhtar, until it and the bodies of al-Masri and Sa'id were transported to Haifa later that evening. By that point, word had spread to Haifa and Nablus, and the news of al-Qassam's death was slowly being delivered out of Palestine.³⁸

David Hacoen, who at the time was both a member of the Haifa municipal council and the Haganah, complained to his contacts at the Jewish Agency—who were eager to learn details of the shaykh's death—that he had been unable to call from the Arab pressman's office because Akram Zu'aytir was on the phone the whole evening. As he “cried like a boy,” Zu'aytir called around to Arab leaders informing them of al-Qassam's death. Zu'aytir notified the newspapers of Nablus's intent to commemorate al-Qassam and called on “public figures and the heads of the political parties” to participate. Subhi al-Khadra came to Nablus that evening and met with Zu'aytir to develop a response that would properly seize the political moment that the death of their friend presented.³⁹

Despite evidence that the British had been suspicious of al-Qassam's activities since the beginning of the decade, they were—at least publicly—dismissive of the political significance of his death. In their official communique about the battle of Ya'bad, they described a “gang of bandits” that had “lately been collecting in the north of the Nablus sub-district and moving about in the hills there.”⁴⁰ Later, as the 1936–1939 Revolt began in the months after his death, the archival record suggests that the earlier dismissal of the al-Qassam organization as a band of brigands and bandits was intended to deny legitimacy to the movement.

Members of the Yishuv were much more circumspect. David Ben-Gurion, who had been elected chairman of the Jewish Agency that summer, was convinced that al-Qassam's death would provide the Palestinians with their very own “Tel Hai”—referring to one of the foundational events in modern Israeli nationalism in which a Russian Jew named Joseph Trumpeldor was killed in an attack on the Tel Hai settlement by neighboring Arab villagers in 1920. Trumpeldor's death was seen as an act of heroism and self-sacrifice to a nascent nation, and the parallels rightly seemed obvious to Ben-Gurion.⁴¹

The Arabic newspapers, many of which were sympathetic to the nationalist cause and hostile to the status quo that had developed with the British, took up the mantle for al-Qassam. *Al-Jami'a al-Islamiyya* called him a “brave martyr” while *Filastin* claimed that al-Qassam “fought and died for his holy ideal” and was a “pious and faithful Muslim.” *Filastin* continued in its next issue, arguing that the appearance of al-Qassam's group “proves that the government's policy with regards to the Arabs is a failure.” The response of aver-

age Palestinians to al-Qassam revealed, the paper argued, “the true desires of the people.”⁴²

This particular claim in *Filastin* came on the heels of the funeral, organized largely by Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim. Shortly after al-Qassam’s death, Ibrahim had formed the “committee for the martyr’s funeral” and had sent telegrams to “different Arab parties, national youth, and the heads of the chambers of commerce and municipalities,” calling on them to attend the funeral and to raise a black banner in mourning.⁴³

■ Al-Qassam and his dead companions were eulogized from the minaret of al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and from smaller mosques all over Palestine. In Haifa, speakers delivered tributes in al-Jarina Mosque; they spoke to the sacrifice of the three, but to their leader al-Qassam in particular. Shaykh Yunis al-Khatib, the former *qāḍī* of Mecca and nominal head of the ‘ulama’ in Haifa, proclaimed: “Dear and sainted friend. I heard you preaching from this lectern, leaning on your sword, now that you have left us you have become, by God, a greater preacher than you ever were in your lifetime.” Another eulogy proclaimed: “None has served the homeland but you with loyalty, and where is the valour of the sons of the homeland? . . . Since you are Izz ad-Din and the only one who is of true faith . . . they killed you and they were not rightfully appointed to rule you.”⁴⁴

The funeral procession itself began an hour late, delayed as waves of mourners arrived on foot from the villages outside of Haifa. Estimates for its size range from “hundreds” to, according to the newspaper *Filastin*, thirty thousand. There were undoubtedly thousands in the streets, and the procession stretched for miles; it moved slowly and with relative calm behind the flag-draped biers. The occasional clash between mourners and police broke out away from the procession and served to highlight the politically charged climate in the aftermath of the deaths. Despite al-Qassam’s very public prohibition against exclaiming “*Allahu akbar!*” his corpse was met with such chants as it made its way to the cemetery at Balad al-Shaykh.⁴⁵

The al-Qassam family received a number of telegrams expressing condolences from around the country. Among them were handwritten Qur’anic passages from nationalist leaders, including Ragheb al-Nashashibi (“Rejoice then in the bargain you have made. That is the supreme triumph”), and ‘Adil Shawwa of Gaza (“Never think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive, and well provided for by their Lord”). Other messages arrived from Jamal al-Husayni (“Paradise for the righteous martyrs!”), a group of Jaffa Youth Congress and YMMA leaders (“We congratulate the

nation for laying the cornerstone of political independence and freedom”), and representatives of Tulkarem’s “youth” (“Thank you to the righteous martyrs who shake the Arabs in their national aspirations”).⁴⁶

Al-Qassam’s associates within the nationalist camp in Haifa quickly understood the political ramifications of his death. Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim dispatched ‘Atif Nur Allah and Mahmud Munawara to the Islamic Society to broker a meeting between various Palestinian factions in Haifa. The Islamic Society and the YMMA—now once again under Ibrahim’s leadership—released a joint statement condemning the British for the killings and calling on Palestinians to emulate the martyrs.⁴⁷

Akram Zu‘aytir, writing in *al-Jami‘a al-Islamiyya* in early December, demanded the removal of the Palestinian leadership, who, he claimed, were the “stumbling blocks” in the way of the national movement. “The blood of the Arabs, killed in the war for freeing their country, is boiling and will not be still as long as such leaders are at the head of the cause.” The editors of *al-Difa‘* were no less direct: “Why wouldn’t you, leaders of the parties, lead? You didn’t even walk in the martyr’s funeral processions—is there anything simpler than wiping those tears with hands of mercy and appreciation?”⁴⁸

■ In truth, the Palestinian leaders feared that al-Qassam’s revolt signaled the beginning of a populist nationalist movement that would no longer look to the traditional leadership, who derived power from membership in the notable class or an important family. This was borne out a week later, when the five heads of the Arab parties met with High Commissioner Arthur Wauchope. They made what reads like a last-ditch attempt to convince the mandate authorities to concede something concrete that might legitimize their leadership in the eyes of a discontented population.⁴⁹

In conveying his report on the meeting to the secretary of state for the colonies in early December 1935, Wauchope notes that the “general feeling among Arabs has become definitely more hostile” and shows concern that al-Qassam and his group have been “acclaimed by many Arab leaders and by the whole Arabic Press as martyrs and heroes, bravely sacrificing themselves in the cause of national and religious independence” despite “deliberately” shooting a police officer.⁵⁰

There was good reason for the traditional nationalist leadership and the mandate authorities to be concerned. Al-Qassam’s unique blend of a popular message and admirable piety coupled with his charismatic activities made him an appealing figure for a political community searching for a more representative voice.

Jamal al-Husayni—the Palestine Arab Party president, who a few weeks earlier had shared the stage with al-Qassam in Haifa—in an act of foresight uncharacteristic of the Palestinian leadership, is quoted in the meeting with the high commissioner as saying: “One day it might be that every Palestinian would become as one of those [Qassamites] who were killed a few days ago near Jenin.”⁵¹

Memorial

National time is marked in origin stories, in constitutions and declarations, in wars and peace treaties, in deaths and revolutions. One such milestone in the national history of the Palestinians was marked when ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam was gunned down on the northern slope outside Ya‘bad. Since that day in 1935 it has not always been clear what sort of milestone it was. The way al-Qassam fits into much of the history of the Palestinians isn’t always as clear cut as it might seem; the question of what exactly makes al-Qassam singular or important remains a live question. Trying to approach an answer begins with grappling—as best we can—with who he was and where he came from.

The importance of al-Qassam *as symbol* is the easier case to prove. The way in which he has been picked up by various resistance movements since his death testifies to the purchase held by his name and likeness. This is certainly the case among the generation of Palestinians with connections to the pre-Naqba period (but in some ways also applies to more recent generations). For those he left behind—his family, his brothers in arms, his associates in working-class politics—identifying exactly how he affected their personal choices in the subsequent years is a difficult task. At best, we can make the inference that in their words and deeds we see an echo of al-Qassam as moral example for them to follow on the road to national liberation. In this reading, his ghost lingered, sometimes quite literally, as with the cartoon on the front page of *Filastin* in July 1936.

Palestinians have drawn upon the figure of ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam to legitimize their struggle against colonialism at three pivotal moments in the twentieth century: during the 1936 Revolt, following the 1967 war, and with the outbreak of the First Intifada in the late 1980s. At all three moments, we



Two Arab Heads

زعيان

Ragheb Bey Nashashiby : We shall fight to the end...
Haj Amin Hussein ; We shall not give up ...
Weizmann ; Is it possible??? I never expected that!!

واقب بك النشاشيبي :- سنواصل الحرب الى النهاية...
الحاج امين الحسيني :- الى النهاية...
وايزمن :- هل هذا ممكن?... اني لما كن انتظرنا

Figure 8. "Two Arab Heads," *Filastin*, July 12, 1936.

see groups of Palestinians profess to be al-Qassam's heirs. Yet with each iteration, only a part of al-Qassam is lauded: his sacrifice, his social work, his faith. In reality, the whole picture of a flesh-and-blood man was buried with his corpse on November 22, 1935.

■ The funeral procession was a political event that the Palestinian nationalist leadership underestimated, and the memorial service for 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his dead companions was no less so. The event, typically commemorated in Muslim traditions on the fortieth day after death (called *arba'in*, "forty" in Arabic), was a fraught circumstance for nationalist parties. They had been met with popular remonstrance for their sloppy and apparent indifference toward al-Qassam's funeral. Their approach to the *arba'in* would need to be more carefully played.

In Haifa, planning for the memorial began soon after the funeral. The YMMA formed an executive committee for the purpose of planning its commemoration. The committee, which included Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, Ramzi 'Amr, Rifat 'Abdu, Ahmed Abu Zayd, and Muhammad Munawar, met at Ibrahim's home and announced they would hold the *arba'in* the afternoon of Sunday, January 5, 1936. The Youth Congress announced its own plans for a competing *arba'in* for the same afternoon at the PAWS headquarters. The Youth Congresses of Haifa and al-Tira were responsible for organizing the event, which was expected to draw members of Youth Congresses from across the country. Allied with the mainstream nationalists in Jerusalem and Jaffa, the Youth Congresses announced that the speakers would include Jamal al-Husayni, Ragheb al-Nashashibi, Yaqub al-Ghusayn, and 'Abd al-Latif Salah, as well as speeches from Boy Scout leaders and workers federations. The British considered the fact that these two memorials were held in the same city at the same time by two sets of nationalists a sign of "strain and possible dissolution" of the momentum toward unity among the nationalists following al-Qassam's death.¹

In Nablus, youth committees were formed at Akram Zu'aytir's instigation. They met and put together ambitious plans, and they announced that they wanted to hold a "massive service" at Ya'bad and possibly erect a monument there. The town of Baysan, six miles west of where Rosenfeld died, planned an *arba'in* ceremony to celebrate the martyrdom of both al-Qassam and the Syrian nationalist leader Ibrahim Hananu, who led the 1920 and 1925 rebellions in Aleppo and had died of tuberculosis a day after al-Qassam fell.²

The early tensions between different political groups remained, though publicly all were eager to laud al-Qassam's sacrifice. Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, in a wide-ranging newspaper interview in late December, railed against the

“terrible state” of the mandate. The British support for the Balfour Declaration, he argued, had led to “Jewish mass immigration,” the loss of land among farmers, poverty and austerity, and the “judaizing of Palestine.” The grievances he and al-Qassam had professed as leaders of the YMMA were worsening, and al-Qassam’s death provided a renewed opportunity to publicize their message.³

Another pressing concern in the weeks following the battle at Ya’bad was the well-being of the families of the dead and imprisoned. The pious asceticism of the Qassamites was a particularly compelling feature of their story, and activists spread concern across the country for the possible destitution of the families. “Were they martyrs just for Haifa or were they victims for the whole nation?” a column in *al-Difa‘* asked; “Why wouldn’t Jaffa, Jerusalem, Gaza and the rest of the cities and villages mourn and donate to the family?” It was clear that the press wanted the al-Qassam family, as well as the family of his dead companions, to be cared for: “The companions of al-Qassam left their families behind and cannot live without the nation extending its hand of help and embracing them; to make them feel the meaning of sympathy, appreciation and affection.” In another section of the same paper appears the following: “The martyrs departed to the mercy of God and his vast heavens. . . . We should fulfill their trust by not letting their offspring beg in markets. . . . [We say to them] ‘your guardians are gone, now the nation is your guardian.’” A charitable committee took over much of the fundraising and established annual pensions for the families. Muhammad al-Qassam, ‘Izz al-Din’s only son, was admitted into the Rawdat al-Ma’aref, the school run by the Husaynis in Jerusalem, free of charge.⁴

In communities across Palestine, the willing and, it seems, less than willing heard the appeals for support. Akram Zu’aytir raised money from the middle class—“traders and merchants”—of Nablus and used his connections in the press to great effect. *Al-Difa‘* published an advisory that Zu’aytir had supplied them with the names and amounts of donations. Even small amounts were reported in the press. On December 31, members of the Nablus Youth Congress collected five pounds eight hundred mils in exchange for commemorative badges, often featuring an image of al-Qassam, for the families of the martyred. Elsewhere, students at the school in Bayt Dajan (east of Nablus) sent money to Jaffa for the martyrs. People with “normal incomes” were the first to donate money that amounted to eight pounds five hundred mils in the village of Baqa al-Gharbiyya, near Tulkarem.⁵

At the end of December, in advance of the Eid al-Fitr holiday, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim raised 141 pounds for the families of the dead, injured, and imprisoned. Residents of Nablus professed to abstain from customary family

visits at the end of the holy month of Ramadan in order to “mourn the martyrs” and show their “dissatisfaction with the present conditions.” A delegation of youths from Nablus and Baysan traveled to Acre to visit Qassamite prisoners and distribute holiday sweets. In Acre they visited the graveyards of the “martyrs of 1929” before traveling south to Haifa to see the cemetery where al-Qassam was buried. There they recited the profession of faith, the *fatiha*, and laid wreaths. Meanwhile, the Christian youths of Nablus, led by Tawfiq Yusuf al-Khoury, released a statement announcing the community’s decision to abstain from Christmas celebrations. “In unity there is strength,” the statement concluded.⁶

When the day came for the *arbaʿin*, eight hundred people attended prayers at al-Istiqlal in al-Qassam’s name before a Youth Congress delegation and a scout troop led them to the cemetery at Balad al-Shaykh. Five hundred people attended the mainstream memorial for al-Qassam in Haifa, which featured speeches—in what the British considered a “moderate” tone—by Fakhri Nashashibi and Jamal al-Husayni. While at the YMMA memorial, a thousand people, mostly of the “lower classes,” were in attendance to see impassioned speeches by Shaykh Sulayman Farouqi, Awni ʿAbd al-Hadi, Akram Zuʿaytir, Hamdi Husayni, Ibrahim Shanti, Subhi al-Khadra, and Ajaj Nuwayhid. The Nablus YMMA had traveled to Haifa for the ceremony, while ʿAbd al-Hadi and others representing the YMMA had come from Jerusalem. In Jenin, a thousand people congregated in the town’s cemetery to hear speakers praise al-Qassam and assert that he had done more for the cause than all of the leaders to date. Ajaj Nuwayhid published an open letter in *al-Difaʿ* on January 6: al-Qassam and his companions were “martyrs for this nation, and are its idols, in a time where the Arab nation needs idols,” he wrote. “In Haifa we stand our ground and repeat: we will keep fighting.”⁷

■ Ajaj Nuwayhid was right. On the evening of April 15, three months after the *arbaʿin* commemorations, a series of small boulders and empty gas containers were placed astride the Nablus-Tulkarem road. The debris served its intended purpose, by slowing cars and trucks traveling between the villages of ʿAnabta and Nur al-Shams to a stop. There, drivers and their passengers saw armed men emerge slowly from the adjacent fields. The men approached the stopped vehicles and robbed their inhabitants of their money and valuables. Three Jews were removed from a bus, brought to the side of the road, and shot; two were killed. One of the gunmen spoke to a driver and instructed him to “go tell the police and the newspapermen that we are robbing your money in order to buy arms with which to avenge the murder of Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn al-Qassam.”⁸

Since the immediate aftermath of the battle of Ya'bad, it had been clear to the police that there were elements of the Qassamites still on the loose. Early in December, *al-Difa'* had published a claim by the police that three members were still wanted; a week later *Filastin* reported that a large sum of money—five hundred pounds—had been distributed among the Arab and English police officers involved in the two-week manhunt “according to the efforts of each.” The announcement of the reward was surely meant to induce others to contribute to the manhunt and signal that such efforts would be richly rewarded by the mandate authorities. In the process, the Department of Public Security deputized nine people in the villages of al-Jiftlik and Akraha to help in the search. The prospect of earning such a reward was enticing to many of rural Palestine's increasingly poor population.⁹

Unlike some of the other killings, the Nur al-Shams incident sparked retaliation from the now not-so-secretly armed elements within the Yishuv: two Palestinians were murdered near Tel Aviv the following night. Jews in that city clashed with the police during a funeral later that week, and riots—fueled by rumors of dead Palestinians—followed. After one particularly bloody day, April 19, the government declared a state of emergency. The Arab Revolt had started.

■ This was the spark that al-Qassam had hoped for. The pressure in the nationalist leadership that had been ignited by the Jaffa discovery and al-Qassam's death was sustained by the incidents in April. A comprehensive, secret assessment of the revolt's first phase (from April through September) is available in the archives of Britain's War Office. The document paints a pessimistic picture among the British administration and its resident armed forces. From early days, the high commissioner and his district commissioners had placed army units on standby as groups of youths in Jerusalem, Nablus, and Jaffa organized demonstrations and a general strike.¹⁰

The overt network of associates left behind by al-Qassam was central in the strike spreading so quickly: Akram Zu'aytir in Nablus, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim in Haifa, and Ibrahim al-Shanti in Jaffa—key figures in al-Qassam's YMMA-hosted *arba'in*—organized the national committees in their respective cities.¹¹

Underlying all of the discontent, however, were myriad interrelated economic factors that put such stress on Palestinian society that the revolt was hardly surprising. British correspondence suggests that the authorities were aware that unemployment was increasing, especially in Haifa, where fears of consequences from the Italo-Ethiopian War drastically reduced investment and construction. Jewish construction projects suffered initially be-

cause Palestinians had been employed in the industries supplying raw materials. Fresh foods were harder to find. The end of the citrus harvest, and the consequent seasonal unemployment of thousands, contributed to the revolt as well. The transportation network across the country was brought to a near standstill when the Arab Car Owners' and Drivers' Association joined the strike in the early days. Railway workers, employees of the gas and oil companies, and a number of government offices went on strike in August. While the Haifa port, with its strong contingent of Jewish workers, never shut down, the Jaffa port was fully on strike. PAWS called on workers across the country to join in the strike. The burden of supporting striking workers fell to the national committees. They set up food banks in cities to supply Palestinians with staple foodstuffs.¹²

While the general strike played out across cities in Palestine, a parallel rural insurgency developed as well. Four months earlier, in the aftermath of al-Qassam's death, the CID sent a summary detailing what it foresaw as the two options for Arab protest: "non-cooperative policies" or the more worrisome concern, the organization of "gangs . . . popularized in the recent operation of Sheikh Izzel Din and his followers." The British response to the increasing violence was to deport those who it believed were connected to the armed insurgents. Akram Zu'aytir, suspected of being in contact with Qassamites in the northern hills, was first exiled internally to other communities; then he and others were gathered into internment camps. By early summer, the rural insurgency spread from the north to the central highlands of Palestine, and Qassamites were no longer the tip of the spear. While some Qassamites, such as Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir and Shaykh Attiya, continued to lead bands in the north, figures such as 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni (the mufti's nephew) and 'Abd al-Rahim al-Hajj Muhammad emerged as prominent guerrilla leaders in their respective areas.¹³

■ On March 1, 1936, a preliminary hearing for the eight arrested Qassamites began in Nazareth. They were represented by well-known nationalist lawyers including Muin al-Madi and Ahmed Shuqayri. Witnesses were evasive and gave conflicting testimony. A local villager named Khalil al-Hajj Rida admitted to having seen a group of men in a cave on Jabal Faqu'a with German weapons and later hearing a gunshot in the valley, but he claimed that none of the accused were among the men in the cave. A shepherd, Hassan Muhammad Khalifa, swore that he saw Rosenfeld and four armed men in military garb and that one of the men shot and killed Rosenfeld. Earlier he had seen five men in a nearby cave, but he couldn't identify them as being the same men who killed the police sergeant. A third witness, Faiyz Abd al-

Rahman, recanted his earlier police statement that he had seen Farhan al-Sa'di among the men at the cave, because he had been beaten by the police. "It's possible that Shaykh 'Izz al-Din was with [the men in the cave], but Shaykh Farhan was not."¹⁴

The testimony of other witnesses gives us some insight into the message that al-Qassam's group was spreading among villagers of north-central Palestine. Mustafa Ahmad al-Jawadi and Zaki Muhammad were approached by a man in yellow trousers with whom they exchanged clothes. The man, whom they later identify as one of the defendants, Muhammad Yusuf Mahmud, gave them the news that "the government has discovered weapons in a barrel and the Jews are learning to shoot in Haifa." Zaki Muhammad announced to the court that his police statement had also been coerced.

The trial of the Qassamites was scheduled to begin in the fall, but Palestine descended into political chaos in the meantime. The general strike and rural insurgency meant more Palestinians were brought before the courts, forcing judges to adjudicate the legality of different forms of resistance and protest and the mandate's responses. According to a number of mandate officials, the revolt cast the efficacy of the judicial system into doubt. The Air Officer Commanding, Vice-Marshal Richard Peirse, wrote a scathing rebuke, lamenting "the patent and notorious failure of the administration of criminal law to secure that speedy justice and salutary punishment should be meted out to rebels and others aiding and abetting lawlessness and crime." Britain's senior military official on the ground, he complained that since the outbreak of the revolt, "only two death sentences" had been handed down. The fate of the eight members of Qassam's gang would be an important test for Palestine's courts.¹⁵

■ The trial of the Qassamites began at nine o'clock on the morning of October 19 in the Superior Criminal Court in Nazareth. The magistrate presiding was an Irishman named Richard Manning, who had recently been appointed to Palestine's Supreme Court despite a reputation for having limited familiarity with Palestinian law, much of which was based on Ottoman codes. Joining him on the panel was Judge L. E. C. Evans and Jerusalem's justice of the peace, Muhammad al-Barady.¹⁶

The original charges of "premeditated murder in order to facilitate escape from lawful arrest" was reduced to a lesser charge of the "unpremeditated murder" of Constable Mott when a number of the accused, including Ahmed al-Hajj 'Abd al-Rahman Hassan, Muhammad Yusuf Mahmud, Hassan al-Bayir, and Arabi Badawi opted to plead guilty. Instead of the death sentences that Air Vice-Marshal Peirse had surely hoped for, with the lesser

charge the four were sentenced to fourteen years of prison. ‘Abd al-Rahman Hassan was additionally convicted of the unpremeditated murder of Constable Rosenfeld, but this additional sentence was to be served concurrently. Only Shaykh Nimr Haysayn al-Sa’di and Assad al-Mufleh denied their guilt; the prosecution opted not to present any evidence against these two, and their charges were dismissed.¹⁷

Mahmud al-Madi, the respected litigator from Haifa who had helped al-Qassam and ‘Abd al-Hamid Haymur form the PAWS a decade earlier, was one of the defense lawyers. He made an entreaty before the bench that the Qassamites had been treated unfairly in Acre prison. Because of the “important religious and social status” they held, they needed to be treated well. He presented a petition to that effect. The week after al-Madi made these submissions, the *Palestine Post* reported that the issue had risen to the Supreme Court of Palestine.¹⁸

Since the beginning of the revolt, the chief justice of the Palestine Supreme Court, Michael McDonnell, had become a target of the Yishuv’s press. They saw him, rightly, as sympathetic to Palestinian political aspirations and dismissive of the Yishuv’s claims. But when the revolt was at its peak, McDonnell was seen to have overstepped judicial bounds when he criticized the government’s plan to tear down sections of Jaffa’s Old City under the pretense of “public health.” McDonnell ruled in favor of the government but was highly critical of High Commissioner Wauchope for obfuscating what was clearly a collective punishment. Wauchope wrote to the Colonial Office and had McDonnell’s tenure on Palestine’s highest bench ended early. His replacement as chief justice was Palestine’s attorney general, H. Herbert Trusted, a close associate of the high commissioner.¹⁹

The appointment did not take effect before the November 3 hearing on the treatment of the Qassamites, when Muhammad Ali Saleh stood before the now-retiring chief justice and, the *Post* claims, “lodged an application for special treatment” for the four Qassamites serving fourteen years. Saleh argued that the prisoners were “members of the Sufi mystic religious sect . . . and that they could not work as their religion required them to pray at certain hours.” McDonnell, in a move that the Yishuv saw as preposterous and possibly retaliatory, ruled in favor of the Qassamites.²⁰

When the Qassamites continued to be treated in a way they considered unjust—when their religious duties were infringed upon—they launched an eight-day hunger strike later that month. Little changed. Jailed Qassamites, including Nimr al-Sa’di, who despite his acquittal on the murder charges remained in prison, ended up serving an additional year in prison past his expected release when authorities detained him under the Emergency Ordi-

nance. Many of the other Qassamites who had been imprisoned following the battle of Ya'bad but who had not been convicted would not be freed until after the revolt had petered out.²¹

Qassamites (or *Ikhwan al-Qassam*—Brothers of al-Qassam—as they were known during the revolt), though small in number compared to other rebel outfits, remained a potent force in the revolt. The British believed them to be responsible for the assassination in Nazareth of Lewis Andrews, the district commissioner for the Galilee at the end of September 1937. 'Ajjaj Nuwayhid casts doubt on the direct link between al-Qassam and Andrews's killing, arguing instead that it was the spirit of al-Qassam in the "hearts of the people of Haifa and Palestine" and that on the day that Andrews was shot down, the British realized that Qassamites "were not only the men with him at Ya'bad." Nevertheless, the British response to the killing was swift. Over the next two days, "terrorists and undesirable politicians" were arrested all over the north of Palestine: 61 from the districts of Haifa and Acre, 31 from Nablus and Jenin, and 104 from Galilee.²²

Despite the mass arrests, the British authorities were certain that it was Qassamites who were responsible for Andrews's death. In one summary of the events, police noted that an empty cartridge case found at the scene matched a revolver used to kill Haifa detective Halim Basta. Such a forensic investigation is highly dubious, and yet the report concludes that the "assassination of Mr. Andrews and his escort is believed to have been the work of the Izzedine Qassam gang."²³

Qassamite Farhan al-Sa'di became the prime suspect in the investigation that followed, and a number of accused associates of the octogenarian shaykh were arrested and compelled into "confessions." One such statement, made by a "Muhammad Niji Abu Rub," named members of Farhan al-Sa'di's group and recounted details of Andrews's death. In the early morning hours of November 22, police and soldiers of the East Yorkshire Regiment arrested Farhan al-Sa'di in his home village of al-Mazar. Two days later he was tried and convicted in the newly constituted military court system, and, less than seventy-two hours after his conviction, he was hanged in Acre prison.²⁴

Andrews's assassination, the British response, and al-Sa'di's execution, along with the failure of the Peel Commission, hastened what became the second phase of the revolt. The Peel Commission—initially appointed to investigate the causes of the revolt and recommend possible solutions—had issued its report in July 1937. The recommendations, which included the partition of Palestine into Arab, Jewish, and international zones (the latter around Jerusalem), were toxic for a British administration preoccu-

pied with coming war in Europe and concerned about exacerbating tensions with Arabs. The mandate, faced with the ethnic transfers between discrete Arab and Jewish Palestines, balked; thus, the revolt started again in earnest. This time the British cracked down even harder on Palestinian nationalist leaders. Men such as Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, Izzat Darwaza, and Awni 'Abd al-Hadi were incarcerated on the Seychelles Islands in the distant Indian Ocean. The mufti was removed from the Supreme Muslim Council before escaping into exile. The insurgency continued, but cooperation between the British and the Yishuv (while elements of the Yishuv targeted the British) eventually took the momentum from the insurgents. What followed was a decade largely subsumed within the broader global conflict, then a devastating war between the Yishuv, the Palestinians, and the neighboring Arab armies in 1948. The mandate for Palestine came to a close, and the State of Israel took its place.

■ The three-year 1936 Revolt proved catastrophic for the Palestinian leaders who had appealed to High Commissioner Wauchope in the days after al-Qassam's death. The demand for the removal of the Palestinian leadership that came from the masses after his death points to one of the enduring themes of al-Qassam's story: the dichotomy between al-Qassam's organization as "men of action" and the traditional Palestinian leadership as men responsible for countless petitions, speeches, entreaties, and little else. Even al-Qassam seems to have been aware of this dynamic. Early in their confederacy, Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir confronted the shaykh with a choice: "I've heard talk for a long time, and we were touched by your speech, but is it just talk? Or is there action?" "Action," the shaykh replied. Yet, this supposed dichotomy belies the complexity in the Palestinian independence movement writ large.²⁵

Even the relationship between the mufti and al-Qassam is still a matter of historical debate. There are two general theories about the involvement of the mufti in al-Qassam's plan for a rebellion in Palestine: The first holds that al-Qassam had some connection to the mufti, but none when it came to his decision to begin his revolt. This position is shared by few historians of the period—quite surprisingly, considering the absence of evidence for any such connection. Even evidence that al-Qassam knew the mufti personally is thin. Al-Qassam signed the petition when he first arrived in Haifa supporting Amin al-Husayni's nomination to the position; later, as mufti, al-Husayni would have had ultimate say in al-Qassam's appointment to the position of *madhūn*. Beyond these connections there is scant evidence that the two were

in contact. For instance, al-Qassam was not a delegate to the Islamic Congress that the mufti organized in 1931, when Haifa was instead represented by al-Qassam's friend Amin Nur Allah.²⁶

The second theory argues that al-Qassam, possibly using al-Makhzumi as an intermediary, approached the mufti for a joint declaration of rebellion. The mufti would supply al-Qassam with resources (presumably guns and money) for a rebellion in the north, while the mufti led one in south and central Palestine. In some sources the mufti rebuffed al-Qassam politely, saying that the time was not right for such a venture and that he preferred to continue pursuing a political solution to the mandate. Another narrative posits that the mufti agreed to al-Qassam's plan but failed to deliver when al-Qassam took to the hills. This particular scenario makes for strange bedfellows: both Israeli nationalist historians and Palestinian nationalists more sympathetic to al-Qassam give this theory significant purchase. For the former, the mufti remains such a despised figure for his avowed anti-Semitism and eventual association with Nazi Germany that circumstances in which he seems duplicitous and cowardly are given particular credulity. Much of the Israeli nationalist scholarship is based on documents of the Political Affairs Bureau of the Jewish Agency (housed at the Central Zionist Archives), which throughout the mandate held a vested interest in propagating information that discredited the leader of the Palestinians.²⁷

On the other hand, within some of the Palestinian nationalist historiography on this period, the mufti is also held in a great deal of contempt. He receives blame for political missteps and eventually the outright assassination of Arab political figures he considered threats to his personal power. The mufti then becomes emblematic of a divisiveness and parochialism that led to the Nakba. In this sense, the degrees of the mufti's failure to help al-Qassam—whether he politely rebuffed al-Qassam or boldly lied to him in order to have al-Qassam's revolt fail and another rival killed—is irrelevant. It lessens the culpability of Qassamites for their role in the failure of their revolt.²⁸

But did al-Qassam's revolt actually fail? Obviously, in the grand scheme, Palestinians are still without a state. And to again state the obvious: al-Qassam *died*. He was a charismatic leader with a great deal of potential, widely held in high regard for his piety in a place that was led by people generally lacking such traits. In death, then, al-Qassam may have surpassed what he could have accomplished in life. His impact was immediate: like the cartoon depiction in the pages of *Filastin*, his example brought together the disparate parties within Palestinian politics. And on the ground, the organi-

zation he had created in the hills of northern Palestine carried on without him.²⁹

The revolt was the manifestation of what al-Qassam had worked for: mass protests in the cities, popular insurgencies in the countryside, and a violent response from the colonial government, exposing the facade of benevolence that was *sui generis* to the mandate. The 1936 Revolt in Palestine was the revolt he had wanted. Qassamites took on a leading role in the early days of the revolt (see the appendix for some of the roles Qassamites held in its organizational structure). While al-Qassam's death is often described as the inspiration behind the revolt, in most contemporaneous sources the connection is more concrete: the actions of some Qassamites were directly responsible for the outbreak of violence five months after 'Izz al-Din's death. The hasty decision on the part of the British to turn to the brutal suppression of resistance in villages across Palestine only gave oxygen to the Qassamites.

Even the British archival record shows the limited effort made to hide the truth about the violent nature of its counterinsurgency. At the end of May 1936, one British officer reported back to headquarters that he had "initiated, in co-operation with the Inspector-General of Police, village searches. Ostensibly these searches were undertaken to find arms and wanted persons; actually, the measures adopted by the Police, on the lines of similar Turkish methods, were punitive and effective." In fact, these methods of collective punishment, which were first introduced during the revolt by the British and their allies in the Haganah, are another of the important legacies of the revolt. These techniques of occupation and repression would be honed and re-applied again thirty years later when the military of the State of Israel chose to occupy the remaining territory that had been mandate Palestine.³⁰

Conclusion

A few days before the overwhelming Israeli victory in the 1967 war, the soon-to-be-appointed minister of defense for the State of Israel, Moshe Dayan, was visiting troop encampments in the Israeli town of Beersheba, in the Negev Desert. His autobiography recounts a reunion with a man with whom he had a long history: “his Arab,” as Dayan called him, was a Bedouin Palmach recruit whom Dayan had known since his childhood in Nahalal. The man, then a lieutenant colonel in the IDF with the Hebraic cover name of “Amos Yarkoni,” took Dayan home to meet his wife and reminisce about their youth. Yet the sole topic of discussion that Dayan mentions in his memoirs, just days before arguably the most important week in Israeli history, was ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam.¹

The specter of al-Qassam loomed large in Dayan’s memory of his childhood and came to inform a great deal of his opinions about Arabs. Dayan had been one of the night guards at Nahalal at the time of the Yaacobis’ deaths in December 1932. Thirty-five years later Dayan still thought of al-Qassam and the men like him as a *bête noire* for Jewish aspirations in the land of Israel.

A week later, on Monday, June 5, 1967, after a noon-hour meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and his military commanders, Yitzhak Rabin—the military’s chief of staff—asked Dayan what he thought about a planned Israeli assault on Jenin. Dayan suggested taking Ya’bad first; it “had history.” In Dayan’s account it was where “Jacob’s sons had sold their brother Joseph,” and more importantly, it was where al-Qassam had been “shot and killed.”²

In the aftermath of the war, the Israeli Army drove into the West Bank town of Nazlat Shaykh Zayd and stopped in front of a small white limestone home on the side of the hill, just above the spot where al-Qassam had been

killed. Israeli soldiers stepped out of their jeeps and began to search the home of the al-Wasfis. Whether they had known before coming—whether they had heard a legend and had come to see for themselves—or it was a simple coincidence, during their search of the home they uncovered a sword. It was al-Qassam's, entrusted by the al-Qassam family in the 1940s to the al-Wasfis, who had been early supporters. Al-Qassam's sword, described in the eulogy delivered by Shaykh Yunis al-Khatib at his funeral, had earned an Arthurian legend. The soldier who took the sword from the al-Wasfi home took one more tangible scrap of al-Qassam's life with him when he walked out the door. It, and a box of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's belongings that was lost when Amina al-Qassam fled back to Jabla in 1948, are still unaccounted for.

■ The 1967 war was another turning point in the history of Palestine. The occupation of Gaza and the West Bank (as well as the Golan Heights and a plot of land on the border with Lebanon known as the Shebaa Farms) reconfigured the political map within Palestinian nationalist circles. The inability of the neighboring Arab states to help Palestinians through the force of their collective armies encouraged an ethos among the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of self-sufficiency in the field of revolutionary action. Within this context arose the need for a new political vernacular with symbols and mythology of its own: Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock, eagles and lions, the AK-47, the keffiyeh, men on horseback, al-Qassam.

Musa Budeiri points to a fallow period between the 1948 and 1967 wars, before al-Qassam was “rediscovered” in the “late 1960s and early 1970s.” Al-Qassam, Budeiri notes, was “extolled by radical leftists and secular groups within the Palestine Liberation Organization” following the 1967 defeat. The radical leftist groups that rose to prominence in this period include the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (al-Jabhat al-Sha'biyya li-Tahrir Filastin, PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (al-Jabhat al-Dimuqratiyya li-Tahrir Filastin, DFLP).³

Ghassan Kanafani, inarguably one of Palestine's greatest literary talents, was a spokesman for the PFLP and edited its press organ, *al-Hadaf*. One of the larger armed groups under the PLO umbrella, the PFLP remains a pan-Arab, Marxist revolutionary organization and continues to have political influence in Palestine. Kanafani was unequivocal about al-Qassam's importance to the Palestinian revolutionary independence movement. In his 1972 work on the 1936 Revolt, Kanafani placed al-Qassam firmly within the leftist liberationist cannon. Al-Qassam's “famous slogan: ‘Die as Martyrs’ should be understood,” he argued, “in a ‘Guevarist’ sense.” For Kanafani, al-Qassam's most important contribution was his “exposing of the traditional leaders in

the face of the challenge” he posed. His comparison to Ernesto “Che” Guevara, the Argentine Marxist revolutionary who had been murdered only five years earlier, was an intentional reappraisal of al-Qassam’s life story, and not without some legitimacy.⁴

The comparison to Che was neither cynical nor unusual from Kanafani’s perspective. Al-Qassam was not yet subsumed within modern notions of jihad and Islamism. Instead, what was remembered were al-Qassam’s contributions to improving the lives and economic conditions of mandate Haifa’s working poor. Additionally, the similarities between Che Guevara and ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam extend beyond revolutionary notions of vanguards of the working class to encompass the circumstances of their respective martyrdoms. Che had traveled to different countries of Latin America with the express purpose of fomenting revolution in the name of a specific ideology that was at once anti-imperialist and supranational. His final field of battle was Bolivia—not his own country of Argentina. In the Bolivian jungle Che, too, was isolated with a small armed group, hoping to slowly build a revolutionary army from among the nearby villagers. The series of events that led to his murder started when a comrade of his impulsively killed a Bolivian soldier. The subsequent manhunt led to the discovery of Che’s group. His summary execution, at the hands of a Bolivian, is believed to have been directed by an agent of American empire.⁵

In the now well-known interview conducted by ‘Abd al-Ghani al-Karmi in 1930 and published shortly after al-Qassam’s death, al-Qassam purportedly explained to al-Karmi that the “only thing left for this nation is to adhere to what is in the hearts of farmers and workers: of simplicity, faith, and distance from your cities.” Al-Karmi responded that if “they” heard him, “they would accuse him of being a communist.” Of course, if this exchange is accurate, in the context of the 1960s and 1970s—the decades of radicalism in the Palestinian movement—al-Qassam’s words came across most forcefully as proto-Maoism. It is no wonder, then, that the Maoist DFLP, itself an offshoot of the PFLP, also worked to incorporate the image of al-Qassam into its platform. The DFLP argued that al-Qassam’s decade and a half of social work in Palestine with the PAWS labor union, with teaching night school, and with the YMMA aligned with their Maoist tendency of building up grassroots organizations as revolutionary praxis among the peasant class. In 1976, the DFLP released a poster commemorating the “fortieth anniversary of the martyrdom of the fighter ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam” as well as the seventh anniversary of the organization’s founding. Al-Qassam’s portrait appears on a red-and-white-checkered background, a pattern common to the left-wing groups of the PLO.⁶

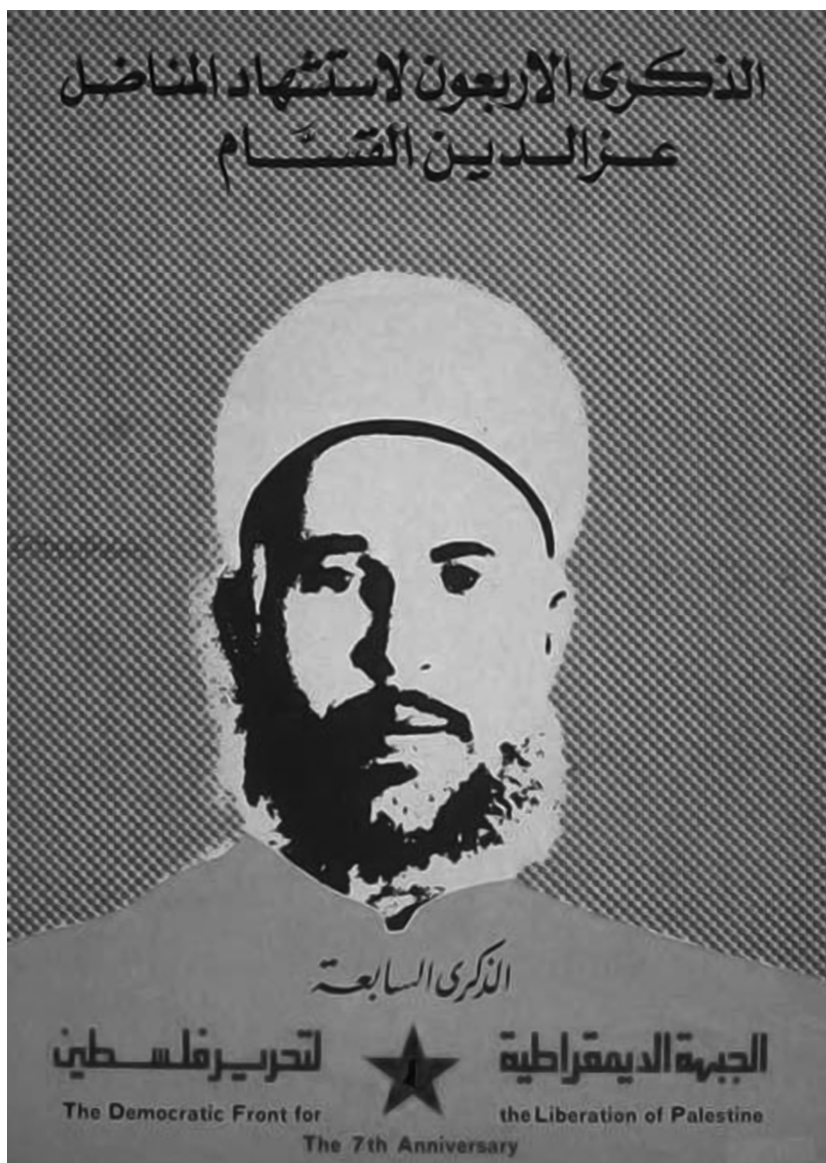


Figure 9. “40th Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Fighter ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam,” Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine poster.

■ In most nation-states, the nationalist myth-making of which such posters were a part has typically relied on institutions that reproduce historical narratives infused with state-approved ideology. The absence of a Palestinian state has made the task of constructing a hegemonic narrative about the early days of its (modern) nation vulnerable to the contingencies of war, exile, and colonialism. In this sense, al-Qassam-as-symbol is remarkable for its durability. He has remained a revered figure among Palestinian nationalists from all sides of the political spectrum, even if they aren't quite sure who or what he was. The appearance of al-Qassam on the poster of a Maoist paramilitary group may seem odd now, but that is only because such groups that were popular in the 1960s and 1970s have been eclipsed by new ideologies of resistance. And yet al-Qassam has remained.

This fungible al-Qassam—an icon to Maoist and Islamist movements alike—testifies to both al-Qassam's endurance as symbol despite the changing tides of worldwide political ideologies and the absence of a concrete understanding of his own personal beliefs. With that durability has come a largely unchallenged historiography. First, the narratives of al-Qassam's life, his period in Palestine in particular, are burdened with "what-ifs." One example of this simply asserts that had al-Qassam received better support, the ending of his revolt may have been different. Samih Hammuda, who studied al-Qassam and his social conditions in more detail than anyone else, claimed that "al-Qassam could have had another role in Palestine[*'s* history] if he had a number of fighters and quality of weapons as big and strong as his enemy's."⁷ But of course northern Palestine is not the Rif, or even Jabal Sahyun, both of which have served as havens for whole populations, let alone small insurgencies. The mountains in which al-Qassam and his men were training and hiding in Palestine were typically less than a thousand feet in elevation and could be traversed in a day. In Latakia, al-Qassam's insurgency against the French took place on mountains two to three times as high and wide as Jabal Faquq'a. Circumstances were better in 1920, and many Syrians considered the outcome of those rebellions disappointing. In 1935, these were less than ideal conditions for an insurgency, and it is impossible to know whether more men and better guns would have necessarily made any difference.

The second issue that recurs in the stories of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam represents one of the highest hurdles to overcome in advancing an understanding of al-Qassam's life and thought. It is a particularly persistent view because it appears in scholarly works on both sides of the ideological spectrum. Here, Israeli historians such as Shai Lachman and Yehoshua Porath align with Palestinians such as 'Ali Husayn Khalaf and Subhi Yasin. From both perspectives, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam was a terrorist/freedom fighter (or, more

appropriately, *mujahid*) who had just one goal: the violent overthrow of the political/colonial order.

In this formulation, everything al-Qassam did was in pursuit of this goal. It is for this reason that little attention has been paid to his early life in Jabla or his time in Cairo beyond establishing the relationship with Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida. His family is absent from these accounts. His time working in Haifa—the period that receives by far the most scrutiny—is reduced to organizational machinations to support the Ikhwan al-Qassam. According to these Israeli and Palestinian nationalist accounts, the Young Men's Muslim Association in Haifa was set up not because al-Qassam saw the economic anxieties of the city's development affecting the young and the poor, but because it was a front for jihad. This narrative insists that his job as *madhūn* was not a fix for his financial troubles that had him doing something from which he derived pleasure and pride (as he ate wedding meals beside one or two of his own children) but a cover for his recruiting efforts in the villages of northern Palestine. This teleological and reductive process of instrumentalizing everything al-Qassam did in the service of his political goals has meant that the richness of his story gets lost and easy tropes replace a nuanced picture of life in mandate Palestine.

■ The history of al-Qassam's life has other complications that have been either ignored by previous historians or purposefully undermined. Take, for instance, the task of trying to isolate al-Qassam's self-identity, the tension and interplay between what historians in the last thirty years would describe as his “nationalism” with what was clearly his animating force: Islam.

Was he a Palestinian nationalist? A pan-Islamist? An Arab nationalist? These categories are likely anachronistic when applied to al-Qassam and many of his contemporaries, since the very political structures they refer to were still in flux.⁸

Most biographies of al-Qassam have, for instance, downplayed the formative influence his time in the Ottoman military had on his politics. Yet there is an increased acceptance that how we have understood interwar nationalist rebellions has been disconnected from the First World War and from the Ottoman Empire. While there were tens of thousands of anti-colonial rebels in the British and French mandates, Ottomanism and *seferberlik* were potent forces influencing personal identity that have been excluded from a historiography of a Mashriq that jumps from an oppressive ethnic other to a repressive colonial other. As historian Michael Provence notes, “French and British colonial forces continued to fight remnants of the Ottoman army for more than two decades.” Many of the leaders in the 1936–1939 Revolt were

Ottoman veterans of the First World War. It was in the Ottoman military academies and the garrisons such as the one in which al-Qassam was stationed outside of Damascus, not necessarily the secret societies, that anti-colonial rebels developed a sense of political selfhood. If we accept that identity is contingent and relational, Ottoman institutions and Ottomanism itself should not be excluded from the narratives of these nationalisms.⁹

The question of al-Qassam's Islam is also particularly vexing. Attempts to make al-Qassam a link in a chain of Islamist, nationalist fighters animated by Salafism and jihad fail to take into account the changing way people conceived of their relations with "the state." Hamas wants to claim al-Qassam because he preached jihad for the nation, which according to the sources seems to be true. But which nation? What jihad? Al-Qassam's personal sense of *Palestinianness* is certainly debatable. Nafi writes that once al-Qassam arrived in Palestine, it "became his home; his sight was now focused on its people and future." Yet if one accepts Nafi's other proposition, that al-Qassam had been an anti-colonial activist since his attempted expedition to North Africa in 1912, and that this activism was animated by "Arab-Islamism," his identification with Palestine as a national construct was surely more complicated than these later accounts portray.¹⁰

Or take Muhsin Salih's "Al-Qassam wa-l-Tajriba al-Qassamiyya," in which he attributes a Salafi interpretation of the modern state to al-Qassam, quoting him as saying that once the British were expelled, "the law of our nation would be based on the Qur'an." Yet the concept of an "Islamic state"—as Salih conceives of it—requires al-Qassam to perform an epistemological leap forward: envisioning a secular nation-state system to which the modern concept of an "Islamic state" would stand in opposition.¹¹

■ Nels Johnson, in his influential book on Islam in Palestinian politics, describes 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's legacy as follows: "The movement of Sheikh Qassam marked a turning point in the nature of Palestinian politics, and the idiom of this cultural and historical juncture was that of populist Islam." Beverley Milton-Edwards, in her monograph *Islamic Politics in Palestine*, writes that "he made them aware of the disparity between their own situation and that of the British authorities and the new Jewish immigrants to Palestine. He also offered a means of expression for protest: armed struggle through jihad." Here, al-Qassam was "the peasant's friend," who had "established relations with a group in society that was powerless, increasingly landless and indebted and taught them a powerful political and religious message. The rage of the peasant and lower class was quickly picked up by the nationalist leadership."¹²

Johnson and Milton-Edwards are right in the sense that al-Qassam's movement offered Palestinians a distinct vocabulary for popular political action that operated on both religious and nationalist levels. Yet al-Qassam's *Islam* was anything but populist. To be in his movement, one had to accept the precepts of a meritocratic elitism, one that was accessible to anyone who was willing to undertake an ascetic lifestyle and follow the precepts of the shari'a in their most austere form. This was an elitism in the sense that there was a particular way of being—a moral and performative code—that was required of members of al-Qassam's organization.

To call al-Qassam a populist, then, does him a disservice. It was deeper than simply rhetoric and posture. Al-Qassam had an ideology and a position that necessitated difficult answers to difficult questions. When Yehoshua Porath writes that there were no criminals in the Qassamites and that they were devout, he is missing the point. Hasan al-Bayir, Khalil 'Issa, Farhan al-Sa'di, and Nimr al-Sa'di are just the Qassamites we *know* to have been convicted "criminals" before the revolt. But that criminality was relevant for a different reason: al-Qassam's movement was a redemptive one that accepted criminals who had heard the shaykh's *da'wa* and returned to Islam. It was not simply an ideological stance (one of populist anti-colonialism); it was an explicit way of life. This is why the recruits in Ikhwan al-Qassam had to also pass a battery of tests, most of which they were unaware they were even taking. Al-Qassam required his men to make sacrifices long before they faced bullets at al-Barid and Ya'bad. They had to conform to a particular character—integrity, discipline, piety. This was not a movement for everybody.

■ In many ways, Palestinians needed al-Qassam. Before 1935 their heroes had not had the same mass appeal. Hajj Amin al-Husayni may have been the leader of the nationalist forces, and could command mass demonstrations such as those connected to the Nabi Musa celebrations, but his proximity to the British and overt quietism often failed to rouse the Palestinian population on the national level. The next closest may have been Fuad Hijazi, one of the doomed participants in the 1929 riots, who was hanged at Acre. Hijazi seems to have thought his demise likely, allegedly telling the English policeman Douglas Duff at the Acre prison the night before he mounted the gallows: "Take this photograph of me. You will live to see it emblazoned on the banners of the Arabs, leading them to victory and driving the *Ingliz* out of Palestine. . . . It was no death of shame that I am to die. I am to show the way to our young men, to lead them in the fight that shall never cease until the last of you Christian infidels are driven out of the country."¹³

Fuad Hijazi was certainly thought a national martyr in the aftermath of the riots and his death. Songs and poems were written about him and his fellow condemned, such as the Palestinian folk song “Min Sijin ‘Akka” (“From Acre Prison”), written by well-known Qassamite Nuh Ibrahim. But al-Qassam not only replaced Hijazi in the pantheon of national heroes, but may have eclipsed him altogether, considering al-Qassam’s implacable image among Palestinians as “honorable.” Hijazi had been accused of particularly vicious crimes, and even for the many who believed he had been falsely accused, his actions may have appeared inchoate. Al-Qassam, on the other hand, had spent years building a revolutionary organization and had eschewed earlier opportunities for his insurgency, including in 1929.¹⁴

The use of al-Qassam’s death as a symbol began almost immediately. At his funeral he and his two companions were wrapped in the flags of the independent Arab states. Since that point, al-Qassam has come to serve as an icon against which successive cadres of Palestinian leaders have been compared.

The use of his death as a cudgel against the Palestinian leadership reached an apex at the *arbaʿin* commemorations held in his honor in January 1936. The response from the nationalist leadership was at first underwhelming. The Istiqlalist Akram Zuʿaytir is quoted in the press excoriating the mainstream leadership: “Why did the nation stand on one side regarding the death of al-Qassam, and you stood on the other? Why did you not attend the funeral? Where were the goodwill messages from the Grand Mufti, from Ragheb al-Nashashibi . . . and Husayn al-Khalidi?”¹⁵

■ Al-Qassam’s ultimate incorporation into the religious-nationalist narrative comes at the end of the 1980s and the resurgence of Islamic discourse within Palestinian politics during the First Intifada. The mass uprising of Palestinians in the occupied territories began in late 1987, starting first in Gaza before moving to the West Bank. The protests initially consisted of demonstrations and rock throwing, civil disobedience, economic boycotts, and the refusal to peacefully engage with the institutions of Israeli occupation.

The principal guiding force of the Intifada became known as the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (al-Qiyada al-Muwwahida, the UNLU). They communicated their objectives and strategies with the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories through communiqués printed as leaflets or broadcast verbatim over radio stations in Damascus and Amman. Those communiqués frequently featured references to al-Qassam, including communiqué no. 2, made on January 10, 1988, which began “O masses of our glorious people, O people of martyrs, descendants of al-Qassam . . .”; communiqué no. 12, of April 1988, which addressed “our fighting people, the people of al-

Qassam and Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni; the people of struggle and sacrifice”; and communiqué no. 28, of October 30, 1988, which announced a general strike to coincide with the anniversary of al-Qassam’s death: “Saturday, 19 November, the day of the martyr al-Qassam, a day of general strike to commemorate the martyr, Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his brothers, who brandished the rifle against the British enemy in the hills of Ya’bad and Jenin and declared an armed insurrection against tyranny.”¹⁶

While the UNLU kept the image of al-Qassam’s death alive through their communiqués, the Islamic movements in the Occupied Territories were incorporating al-Qassam into their own origin stories. For instance, student elections at al-Najah University in Nablus showed early signs of this trend when the Islamic Bloc—the second-largest student group behind Fatah’s—named their slate of candidates for student council elections “the Holy Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam Bloc.”¹⁷

As described in the introduction, the Islamic Resistance Movement— Hamas—made a claim on al-Qassam’s legacy in its founding covenant, issued August 18, 1988, naming him as the revolutionary spark in a chain of resistance leading all the way to Hamas: “The Islamic Resistance Movement is one of the links in the chain of the struggle against the Zionist invaders. It goes back to 1936 [sic], to the emergence of the martyr ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam and his brothers, the mujahidin, members of Muslim Brotherhood. It goes on to reach out and become one with another chain that includes the struggle of the Palestinians and Muslim Brotherhood in the 1948 war, and the jihad operations of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1968 and after.” Their description of al-Qassam is repeated in a leaflet they produced during the Intifada that marks the date in November when al-Qassam died: “The mujahid, man of religion and Azhari teacher, Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam inscribed a new page of heroism when he fell a martyr . . . after inflicting heavy losses on the British.” The leaflet adds a few biographical notes (he was a teacher at the Islamic school in Haifa, an imam at al-Istiqlal) before concluding that “al-Qassam, symbol of self-sacrifice, al-Qassam—the spark of the revolt of 1936!”¹⁸

To drive this connection home further, one of the group’s founders, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin, organized a military wing under the al-Qassam banner dedicated, as the *New York Times* reported in their first description of the group in 1994, to “suicide missions and armed struggle.” Yassin and the early commanders of the al-Qassam Brigades (Kata’ib al-Qassam) were very successful in interpreting not just the ethos of their namesake, but an organizational strategy as well: “Their small number is evidence of deliberate caution, to maintain secrecy and security.” They had “deliberately organized its

fighting, spying and leadership structures in separate cells that largely work alone instead of with one another.” An Israeli Army official conceded to the *Times* that “they are doing quite a good job.” Their emblematic rockets, developed in the early 2000s, were named after al-Qassam as well.¹⁹

Yasser Arafat, avatar of mainstream Palestinian nationalism through much of the late twentieth century, routinely invoked al-Qassam’s name in his speeches. However, by the time of the Oslo Accords and the reputed “Peace Process” of the 1990s, al-Qassam’s name had become ubiquitous because of the al-Qassam Brigades’ use of suicide bombings in Israeli cities. With so strong and visceral an association of the al-Qassam name with Hamas, it became entirely subsumed within an Islamist worldview.

■ The sociologist Tamir Sorek conducted a nationwide survey in 2008, the details of which were published in his 2015 book *Palestinian Commemoration in Israel*. In the survey, he asked Palestinian citizens of Israel whom they considered the “most important person in the history of the country over the past hundred years.” The most common response was former Egyptian president Gamal Abd al-Nasser, followed by ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam. Admittedly, the raw data was low—only 1.8 percent of respondents chose al-Qassam (compared to over 7 percent for Nasser)—yet these findings are interesting for a few reasons: On one hand, as Sorek explains in a footnote in his introduction, Palestinians of Israeli citizenship are often considered a difficult community to survey by telephone, expressing a general unwillingness to answer questions that may be used against them by the state, which remains hostile to their political demands. On the other hand, if this tendency is accurate, one could reasonably expect the response for al-Qassam to be higher in terms of percentage, though possibly not relative to rank. Nasser was also representative of an ideology with limited currency in 2008, while al-Qassam was synonymous with the militant movement and their rockets, at the time landing by the dozen a day in Israeli communities. A Palestinian with Israeli citizenship might be right to exercise caution in expressing esteem for al-Qassam in those circumstances. In fact, the survey itself was conducted only a month after a ceasefire had been announced between Hamas and Israel.²⁰

While al-Qassam’s name was relatively taboo in an interview with Israeli polling firms, the cultural history of al-Qassam *outside* of the political context (as much as that is possible in discussing his story) was decidedly less so. As described earlier, Palestinian poets eulogized al-Qassam regularly following his death. The most notable case was Nuh Ibrahim, author of the nationalist anthem “Min sijin ‘Akka.” Between December 1935 and Ibrahim’s death in

October 1938, he developed a reputation among Palestinians and the British as the foremost poet of the revolt.

Born into poverty in Haifa, Ibrahim had been an active member of the YMMA and scout organizations in that city and is believed to have come into close contact with al-Qassam, earning at some point the moniker *tilmidh al-Qassam* (pupil of al-Qassam). After the shaykh's death, Ibrahim composed one of the most famous poems on martyrdom: "O What a Loss, 'Izz al-Din."

Oh, 'Izz al-Din we've lost you
 you've become a redemption for your nation,
 Nobody denies your courage
 Oh, the martyr of Palestine,
 How beautiful martyrdom and jihad are
 we wouldn't live a life of slavery,
 Oh, comrades respond to the men of glory
 we would die for the sake of Palestine,
 We've made a promise to God
 that we would be martyrs like 'Izz al-Din,
 Oh, comrades have mercy
 on the souls of homeland martyrs,
 That's a promise we've made
 that every one of us is 'Izz al-Din.²¹

His poems and songs were subsequently censored by the mandate, and public performance of his work was outlawed.²²

Al-Qassam's story—not solely his martyrdom and example for future generations of resistance—has also been captured in a wide array of other media. There are children's books dedicated to him; he appears in the pages of school textbooks in Palestine; there have been fictionalized novels written about him; and in 1981, Syrian state television produced a dramatized mini-series about his life starring Muna Wassef and Asaad Fedda, Syrian actors at the peak of their careers.²³

In fact, al-Qassam remained a particularly important touchstone in Syria as well, in part because of its substantial refugee population, particularly among those for whom the Palestinian cause remains the most salient cause of the Arab people writ large. For the generation born before the First Intifada and the end of the Cold War, he remains a potent symbol. Even within the context of the Syrian Civil War, al-Qassam has somehow remained a

touchstone for people on different sides of the divide. As recently as 2019, the grand mufti of the Syrian Republic, Ahmad Badr al-Din Hassoun, drew on the example of al-Qassam during a commemoration of the life of Melkite Bishop Hilarion Capuci. His speech, broadcast on Syrian State Television (SANA), praised al-Qassam and made a point of describing him as a “son of Syria.”

■ Al-Qassam may not have had the prestige of Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Muzafer or the following of Amin al-Husayni, but he was a gifted orator and preacher, which served as a powerful recruiting tool. Al-Qassam may not have been able to organize movements like Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, nor did he possess the political intuition of a Jamal al-Husayni, but his work with the lower classes of Palestinian society and among the youth of Haifa was genuine and came at a pivotal moment for that cohort’s engagement in politics. Finally, al-Qassam was far from the most effective military strategist or guerilla leader: Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir and Shaykh Farhan al-Sa’di were both better equipped for the revolt their shaykh had planned.

How, then, do we explain al-Qassam’s durability? Even those dismissive of al-Qassam have begrudgingly acknowledged his legacy. Shortly after his death, a police summary noted, “It has been said by well-informed sources that although Sheikh Izzel Din accomplished little or nothing, he expressed in practical form an idea, set an example to his countrymen, and opened a new avenue for political struggle.”²⁴ Like many of his comrades in Haifa, Nablus, and Jaffa, al-Qassam did what many in Jerusalem were unwilling to do: turn to the landless or dispossessed fellah, point at the British or Eastern European Jew, and say with credibility, “*Here* is the cause of your despair.” What made al-Qassam unique was his willingness to sacrifice everything.

Political movements have to use symbols to buttress identity and make it actionable; they have to invent a vernacular. In Palestine, without a state, without a successful revolutionary or general, without even a monarch, such a vernacular had to be populated by figures that represented the characteristics valued by what *could be*. And ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam was certainly that. The durability of his image thus owes a great deal to the things that Palestinians don’t have: a state, a settled fate.

Beyond this, al-Qassam’s life is of historical interest because of what it tells us about an important generation of Ottoman subjects, what it reveals about the way people and ideas circulated in the Ottoman-Arab provinces, what it teaches us about the complex and human ways that Islam was practiced and interpreted by Muslims, and what it reminds us about the lengths to which people will go in a struggle for self-determination.

Epilogue

As Palestinian workers stood in line looking for jobs outside the Haifa Oil Refinery on the morning of December 30, 1947, a van carrying members of the Jewish militant group Irgun threw grenades into the crowd, killing eleven. In response, some Palestinian workers inside the plant murdered thirty-nine Jewish workers before the British army stopped the bloodshed. According to Israeli historian Benny Morris, the leadership of the Haganah believed that the massacre “could not go unpunished, whatever its trigger” and ordered reprisal against the nearby village of Balad al-Shaykh. The next night, soldiers of the Haganah and Palmach used automatic gunfire or grenades to execute dozens of men, women, and children in ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam’s former village. When a full Jewish invasion of the village came in April, the Palestinian residents surely had the events of four months earlier in mind and understood that their only chance at survival was to leave.¹

Since Balad al-Shaykh’s depopulation, the cemetery containing the remains of those killed in the New Year’s Eve massacre, alongside those of ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, have been in danger. Since the Naqba and the creation of Israel, the grave has repeatedly been the site of vandalism. In December 1993 the grave was spray-painted with the words “murderer” and “Kach” — the name of an Israeli far-right group whose membership included a man who, a year later, would gun down dozens of Palestinians at prayer in the Mosque of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Similar graffiti appeared in 2014, when vandals spray-painted the star of David, the names of peace negotiators John Kerry and Tzipi Livni, and the words “price tag,” a common term used to describe Israeli acts against Palestinians.²

But graffiti can be cleaned away. In 1998 an Israeli activist named Avigdor Eskin was sentenced to two years in prison for placing a severed pig’s head



Figure 10. Refurbished tombstone on al-Qassam's grave; author photo.

on al-Qassam's tomb in what appeared to be an attempt to incite intercommunal violence. Using the cover of wildfires across northern Israel, arsonists tried to light trees on fire in the cemetery in 2010. And in 2016 a mysterious hole and tunnel were discovered hidden under debris in the cemetery a short distance from al-Qassam's grave, suggesting some sort of attempted desecration or even grave robbery.³

There are groups of volunteers that clean the cemetery on a regular basis and an activist community called the Popular Committee for the Defense of the Cemetery of al-Qassam that advocates for the site's preservation. Nonetheless, the plot of land, which now falls within the Israeli town of Nesher, was expropriated by the state in the 1960s and, in 2014, sold to an Israeli construction company that announced plans to develop part of the site. The announcement was met with outcry from the Palestinians of Haifa and beyond, who warned that any removal of remains buried in the cemetery would be a gross violation of their rights and could possibly lead to a third intifada.

There have been two tombstones: the first, an imposing marble stone, was broken at some point and lies horizontally atop the tomb. At the bottom, now more difficult to make out, are the words "Together, on the path of al-Qassam." A second, refurbished tombstone has been damaged by vandals but has nonetheless survived for over a decade. It stands erect, cemented in place not long ago, repairs still visible to what had been a broken protrusion at the top. In green paint, it reads:

Here lies the martyr, the most noble *ʿālim*, who was a trustworthy guide. He is our shaykh, al-Qassam, he who was the first among us to rise with the banner of jihad for the victory of Islam. He died a martyr in a pure act of grace during the battle of Yaʿbad in the month of *shʿabān*, and so God awarded him with his finest honor—honoring him with the angels of paradise. And if you wish to describe his epitaph in history, say: "In the highest place in heaven, ʿIzz al-Din al-Qassam lies."

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This book has taken a decade to research and write. When I first discussed the idea of doing this book, my children were yet to be born, and now they seem like adults. The commitment, in terms of time and resources, I've put into this book would never have been possible without dozens of people helping me along the way.

If this book allows me to think of myself as a historian and writer, I would need to first thank Laila Parsons. I started working with Laila when I came to Montreal in my early twenties to work on a master's degree at McGill University Institute of Islamic Studies. Beginning with my first seminar, Laila has been a tremendous influence on me, as anyone who has read both her work and this book can attest. She's been wise and patient with me when a complicated life got in the way, and she was willing to put a foot down when it was required. I'm grateful to think of her as my mentor.

At McGill, I was lucky to have another gifted historian and biographer, Brian Lewis, introduce me to British history. He was unendingly kind, read an early version of this book closely, and gave me encouragement when I had doubts. Without Martin Bunton this book would never have come to be. His grasp of the sweeping political and geographic terrain covered within these pages is, I suspect, unparalleled. He was gracious enough to give me time to work my way through the research and patient enough to nudge me in better directions. Lastly, Malek Abisaab has been a scholarly fixture in my life since I first came to Montreal. He's taught me Arabic, given me parenting advice, offered me teaching experience, and most of all pushed me to expand my ways of thinking about the history of the modern Middle East.

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In Palestine many people helped me think through 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam's life as best we could, eighty years after his death. Most important was the al-Qassam family. 'Izz al-Din's grandsons, 'Abd al-Samad and Ahmad al-Qassam, have been extremely supportive of this project and have been willing to answer any questions I have. 'Abd al-Samad's life, like those of millions of Syrians, has been irredeemably upended in civil war, and yet he's always been a text or email away. Ahmad, with whom I walked the grove of Ya'bad and

spent hours discussing his grandfather, has been equally helpful. Abu Muhammad al-Wasfi of Ya'bad welcomed me in his home, and I was assisted throughout by my friend Hijazi Eid. Professor Samih Hammuda was an invaluable source and was, without question, the most knowledgeable person on al-Qassam anywhere. His passing is a great loss.

Birzeit University, and the town of Birzeit, has been a welcoming place, and I'm indebted to everyone who has helped me at various points since I arrived as a Palestinian-dialect student more than a decade ago. Finally, in Cairo, the Ghabrial and Hanna families were gracious hosts and facilitated my visit to al-Azhar.

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I thank the staff at the Dictionary of Canadian Biography at the University of Toronto (where I've miraculously found a home as a historian and editor), whose guidance in research and whose editing standards remain unmatched in this country: Stephanie, Julia, Chris, Jonathan, Willadean, and most of all Robert Fraser. The DCB has not only paid the bills but made me a better scholar. The general editor (and my first history professor), David A. Wilson, has been a formidable scholarly example for me as one of this country's most accomplished biographers. Any mistakes of editing in this book are mine and I hope won't cost me my job.

Portions of this book appeared in the article "Teacher, Preacher, Soldier, Martyr: Rethinking 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam," in the December 2013 issue of *Die Welt des Islams*. That article benefitted greatly from the editing of Joas Wagemakers and Thomas Hegghammer, world-class scholars of Islamism.

So many excellent scholars and civilians have made suggestions to me in emails, between conference sessions, and over various beverages. Friends have looked over my Arabic or Hebrew translations, helped me find Ottoman documents, given me advice on far-flung archives, and much more. Without these people this book would be so much worse: Hussam Eldin Ahmed, Virginia Aksan, the late Issa Boullata, Kerry Fast, Mike Ferguson, Michael Fischbach, Louis Fishman, Ellen Fleischmann, Sarah Ghabrial, Shu-

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As the only child of a single parent, I cannot overstate that parent's influence. My mother, Anne, raised me through some challenging years, and now as a parent myself I'm often taken aback by the effort, love, and support that she still offers despite rare thanks. My father, Michael, loved books and ideas, and his untimely illness, the sudden theft of his mind and memory as I started this project, has made my work on it complicated and ambivalent, at times urgent, at times impossible. The fact that he was not able to read it breaks my heart.

My twins, Finn and Ryann, were born a month after I began this project and somehow knew to sleep full nights so I could get a couple of hours of work done. If they weren't such good kids, I don't know how I would have finished this. My partner, Danielle, has put up with my long absences, research trips on four continents, commutes to teach, procrastinations, vacant and distracted interactions, and promises that this book would be finished eventually. For me to say much more would be trite, but she should know that she made every word here possible.

Finally, I think it would be strange for me not to acknowledge 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, a man I've thought about—literally—every single day for more than a decade. The biographer has a notoriously complicated relationship with his or her subject, and this was no different. At the very least, I hope this book does him a measure of justice.

APPENDIX: PROVISIONAL LIST OF QASSAMITES

These men either were longtime associates of ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam or came to his cause after his death and rose to prominence in the 1936–1939 Revolt under the banner of Ikhwan al-Qassam.

This list is compiled from a number of sources including Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement*, 388–403 (YP); Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam*, 52–54, 71 (SH); Ezra Danin and Ya‘akov Shimoni, *Te‘udot u-Demuyot mi-Ginze ha-Kenufiyot ha-‘Arabiyot bi Me’or‘ot 1936–1939*, 222 (ED); “The Shaykh Qassam Band—Its Origins and Members,” Haganah Archives, file IS 8/03 (HA8/03); Subhi Yasin, *Al-Thawra al-‘Arabiyya al-Kubra (fi Filastin)*, 1936–1939, 24–25 (SY); Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir (Khalil Muhammad ‘Issa ‘Ajak): al-Qaid al-Qassamiyya li-l-Thawra* 36–39, chapter 7(AI).

Al-‘Abd, ‘Abd al-Fattah (alias Abu ‘Abdallah)

Origin: Silat al-Zahr, Nablus district

Survived Ya‘bad

Band commander in 1936–1939 (YP)

Killed during the 1936–1939 Revolt (HA8/03)

Abu ‘Ali, Shaykh Sulayman

Origin: Sumsum, Gaza district

Band commander in 1936–1939 (YP)

Abu Durra, Yusuf Sa‘id (alias Abu al-‘Abd)

Origin: Silat al-Harithiyya, Jenin district

A porter at the Palestine railways and laborer at the Haifa oil terminal

Arrested in the aftermath of Rosenfeld’s death

However, ‘Arabi Badawi lists him as a member of the northbound group after the Battle of al-Barid (SH)

Regional commander of Ikhwan al-Qassam during the revolt (YP)

Sentenced to death and killed (HA8/03)

Founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Regional commander for Jenin (AI)

Abu Ja‘b, Mahmud

Origin: Qabatiya, Jenin district

Sub-band commander during revolt (YP)

Extradited to Syria (HA8/03)

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Abu 'Ayun, Muhammad

Origin: Unknown

Palestine Police officer; head weapons trainer for Ikhwan al-Qassam

Founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Abu Zayd, Shaykh Naji

Origin: Haifa

Member of the surveillance cell (SY)

Sub-band commander during revolt (YP)

Ahmad, Shaykh Dawud

Origin: Bayta, Nablus district

Original Qassamite on Jabal Faqu'a

Member of the northbound group (SH)

'Ali Ahmad, Mustafa

Origin: Saffuriyya, Nazareth district

Executed for his alleged involvement in the Nahalal bombing

Early Qassamite (AI)

Ashtawi, Shaykh Mahmud

Origin: Unknown

Commander for Wadi Khalid area (AI)

'Awad, Shaykh 'Attiya Ahmad

Origin: Balad al-Shaykh, Haifa district

Band commander (YP) for the Jenin area (AI)

Founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Badawi, 'Arabi

Origin: Qabalan, Nablus district

A young man when he went into the hills with al-Qassam

Survived the Battle of Ya'bad; sentenced to fourteen years in prison

Al-Bayir, Hassan Ibrahim

Origin: Burqin, Jenin district

Reformed hashish smuggler

Procurement cell (SY)

Wounded and captured at Ya'bad; sentenced to fourteen years in prison

Barham, Surur

Origin: Haifa

Sub-band commander (YP)

Diwan, Diab

Origin: Unknown

Arrested in post-Nahalal "secret society" trial

Founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Ghalayini, Ahmad

Origin: Haifa

Arrested as bomb maker in Nahalal bombing investigation; sentenced to fifteen years in prison. See figure 11.

Al-Ghizlan, Muhammad al-Safuri (alias Abu Mahmud)

Origin: Saffuriyya, Nazareth district

Haifa rebels' coordinating committee (YP)

Al-Hamdan, Shaykh 'Arif

Origin: Umm al-Fahm, Jenin district

Sub-band commander (YP)

Al-Hanafi, Shaykh Muhammad

Origin: Syria (lived in Baysan)

Compatriot of al-Qassam's in Syria; went into exile with al-Qassam to Haifa

Sub-band commander in revolt (YP)

Hassan, Ahmad al-Hajj 'Abd al-Rahman

Origin: 'Anabta, Safad district

With the group on Jabal Faqu'a

Responsible for firing the shot that killed Rosenfeld? (SH, 73)

Al-Husayn, As'ad Mifleh

Origin: Umm al-Fahm, Jenin district

Wounded and captured at Ya'bad

Al-Ibrahim, Tawfiq (alias Abu Ibrahim al-Saghir)

Origin: 'Ayn Dur, Nazareth district

Cigarette seller in Nazareth (YP)

Died in Syria between 1939 and 1948 (HA8/03)

'Issa, Fu'ad

Origin: Ya'bad, Jenin district

Qassamite in Haifa (HA8/03)

'Issa, Khalil Muhammad (alias Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir)

Origin: Shafa'Amr, Nazareth district

Laborer (see chapter 5 for biographical details)

Accused in Nahalal bombing; accused in Secret Society trial

Founding member of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Leader of Ikhwan al-Qassam during revolt; regional commander; member of the "central committee" (YP)

Jabr, Maruf al-Hajj

Origin: Ya'bad, Jenin district

One of the Qassamites in Jabal Faqu'a

Was involved in the Battle of al-Barid and escaped back to Haifa (SH)

Khalaf, Muhammad Abu Qasim (alias Muhammad al-Hulhuli [SY])

Origin: Hulhul, Hebron district

Beverage vendor

Killed at the Battle of al-Barid

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Al-Khalil, al-Hajj Ahmad

Origin: Hebron district?

Khattab, Dawud Shaykh

Origin: Al-Kababir, Haifa district

Among the Qassamites at Jabal Faqu'a

Arabi Badawi claims Khattab led the second, northbound group following the Battle of al-Barid (SH)

Al-Khidr, Mahmud (alias Abu Khidr)

Origin: Haifa

Band commander (YP)

Founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Mahmud, Muhammad Yusef

Origin: Sulam, Nazareth district

Part of the original group at Jabal Faqu'a (SH)

Al-Makhzumi, Shaykh Mahmud Salim (alias Abu Ahmad)

Origin: Zar'in, Jenin district

Member of the "Political Communications" cell; possible contact point between al-Qassam and the mufti (SY)

Survivor of Ya'bad; alternately, Badawi states he was a member of the northbound group following the Battle of al-Barid (SH)

Band commander (YP)

Al-Misri, 'Attiffa Ahmad

Origin: Egypt, living in Haifa

Killed at Ya'bad

Mizra'wi, Ahmad (alias Abu 'Ali)

Origin: Mazra'a, Ramallah district

Member of the rebels' coordinating committee, Haifa (YP)

Musa, Shaykh Muhammad 'Id

Origin: Kawkab Abu al-Hayja, Nazareth district

Band commander (YP)

Al-Muslih, Shaykh Na'if

Origin: Saffuriyya, Nazareth district

Band commander (YP)

Qasim, 'Abd Allah

Origin: Baqah al-Gharbiya, Tulkarem district

Sub-band commander (YP)

Al-Qassab, Kamil

Origin: Syrian 'ālim

May have been leader of the religious cell (SY)

Provided religious guidance to Qassamites following al-Qassam's death

Al-Sa'di, Shaykh Farhan

Origin: Al-Mazar/Nuris, Jenin district

Leader of the second group of Qassamites who withdrew following Battle of al-Barid

Led early revolt campaign in Safad area

Captured and executed by the British in November 1937

Band commander (YP)

Al-Sa'di, Shaykh Nimr Husayn

Origin: Shafa'Amr, Haifa district

Procurement cell (SY)

Wounded at Ya'bad and captured; charges dropped at trial but detained for years under Emergency Ordinance provisions

Salamah, Hassan

Origin: unknown

Band commander for al-Sahel area (AI)

Al-Salih, 'Abd al-Rahman (alias Abu 'Umar, possibly al-Hamid)

Origin: Silat al-Zahr, Nablus district

Band commander (YP)

Went to Syria (HA8/03)

Al-Salih, Muhammad (alias Abu Khalid, possibly al-Hamid)

Origin: Silat al-Zahr, Nablus district

Coachman and carrier in Haifa (YP), fellah, and gas stove salesman (AI)

Founder and early cell leader of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Assassin of Halim Basta (AI)

Band commander (YP)

Band commander in the "outskirts of Nablus" (AI)

Killed during revolt (HA8/03)

Al-Shaykh, Rashid 'Ubayd (alias Abu Darwish)

Origin: Tira, Haifa district

Band commander (YP)

Founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam, possibly from the Nablus region (AI)

Taha, al-Hajj Salih Ahmad

Origin: Saffuriyya, Nazareth district

Member of the rebels' court (YP)

Involved in the Nahalal bombing; arrested, charges withdrawn

Tawbah, Shaykh Ahmad (alias Abu Ghazi)

Origin: Saffuriyya, Nazareth district

Assistant band commander (YP)

Involved in Nahalal bombing; arrested, charges withdrawn

Went to Syria with Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir during the revolt (HA8/03)

Acted as a scout with this group (AI)

ʿUbayd, Shaykh ʿAli al-Hajj

Origin: Jabla, Syria

Compatriot of al-Qassam's in Syria

Went into exile with al-Qassam to Haifa

Zaʿrura, ʿAli Ibrahim

Origin: Saffuriyya, Nazareth district

Assistant band commander (YP)

Zaʿrura, Shaykh Mahmud

Origin: Saffuriyya, Nazareth district

Fellah and gas stove salesman (AI)

Named in ʿAli Ahmad's Nahalal "confession" as a member of the Saffuriyya secret society

Founding member and early cell leader of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)

Zibawi, al-Hajj ʿAbd Allah Yusef

Origin: Al-Zib, Acre district

Killed at Yaʿbad

Other members or aliases about whom less information is known:

- "Abdul Qasem," founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)
- "Abu Adnan," commander in outskirts of Jenin (AI)
- "Abu Ibrahim al-Khalil" (AI)
- "Abu Kamal," commander in outskirts of Jenin — killed (AI)
- "Abu Muhammad al-Ghuri," founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)
- "Ahmed al-Fareen," founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)
- "Al-Hajj Abd al-Hamid," a.k.a. "Abu Amin," from Tira, Haifa district, early Qassamite
- "Hajj Husayn Hammam," founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)
- "Al-Hajj Saleh al-Nasser," from Saffuriyya, early Qassamite
- "Ibrahim Abu Diyya," commander in Hebron, wounded and died in Beirut (AI)
- "Ismail al-Bayad," founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)
- "Issa al-Batat," from al-Dhahriyya, commander in Hebron, died in 1938 (AI)
- "Mahmud al-Kassab," early Qassamite (AI)
- "Mahmud Salim," from Saffuriyya (SH 71), part of the group of Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir that fled to Syria, wounded in battle (AI)
- "Musa Qasim," founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)
- "Naif al-Mutlaq" (possibly Naif al-Muslih), founder of Ikhwan al-Qassam (AI)
- "Shaykh Naif al-Zamil," early Qassamite (AI)

A NOTE ON SOURCES

In a 2011 *History Compass* article, Laila Parsons, a historian of the modern Middle East, argued that the paucity of micronarratives in the field's historiography is due, in part, to a prevailing focus on nationalism, colonialism, and orientalism among historians of the period. In this post-Said, post-Foucault era, writing a discrete narrative history becomes contentious when much scholarly focus is directed toward exposing the discursive underpinnings of historical work. This focus on the linguistic turn has particularly limited the production of serious scholarly biographies of Arabs in English for three interconnected reasons: First, the accessibility and richness of the colonial archive overshadows that of the archives of Arab states. This is particularly true in the case of Palestine, where not only is there no state archive, but important civil archives have themselves been the target of attack.¹

Second, memoirs of Arab figures from the period tend to follow a pattern found in the memoirs of other anti-colonial nationalists—in particular those in India—in which the author self-consciously constructs narratives in furtherance of those nationalisms. This is a particularly salient feature of memoirs of Palestinian nationalists, whose nation-building exercise remains unresolved.²

Third, the agency on the part of the historian in distilling, interpreting, ordering, and deploying sources in a narrative strategy that allows close descriptions, plot, characters, and action to come to the fore limits discourse analysis in a way that, in this post-*Orientalism* world, scholars of the Middle East find suspicious.

Part of the problem with writing a biography of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam is the lack of documents. There are very few surviving primary sources written by his hand, and none of them are particularly revelatory about his character. There is nothing from which I can derive psychological import or hypothesize meaning. The absence of a decent personal archive—diaries, correspondence, even memoir—makes the examination of al-Qassam in a phenomenological framework much more difficult, though not impossible. The one exception, of course, are his thoughts on the exclamation of *tah̄lil* and *takb̄ir* at funerals. On this he wrote quite publicly, including surviving letters to newspapers and a co-written book. The fact that this book—relatively parochial in its topic and scope—has been reprinted a number of times I think testifies to the market for material on or about al-Qassam (and the dearth of good, verifiable information).³

As much as I can, I have had al-Qassam speak through his actions and, in those rare circumstances, his words. But I have also employed other sources, such as the Arabic al-Qassam biographies and Arabic primary sources related to his life, as well as British colonial (and Yishuv) documents to flesh out his period in Palestine and French colo-

nial documents for his time in Syria. I've used contemporary accounts from Arabic, Hebrew, English (both British and American), and French newspapers. I've also made use of selected oral history interviews given by surviving Qassamites in the decades in which they were alive.⁴

The abundance of hagiographies in Arabic provides me with a very rich collection of sources. However, the attribution of words and deeds to al-Qassam is often difficult to verify. As often as I can, I have used quotes that have multiple sources and referenced questions of reliability in the footnotes. Similarly, I have also used the memoirs of prominent figures and those close to al-Qassam, including new works such as the memoirs of Qassamites Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir and Ghazi Tawbah, as well as the well-trodden accounts of nationalist and resistance politics in the mandate by 'Izzat Darwaza, Bajhat Abu Gharbiyya, Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, Ahmad Shuqayri, Subhi Yasin, and Akram Zu'aytir — all associates of al-Qassam's to varying degrees. While these memoirs may present a tendentious historical record of the role of the author or the political alignments of the day, they often contain rich details about the author's social environment. They also often contain reproduced primary documents and photographs, making them an invaluable source.

Likewise, oral history interviews have proven to be of value. This book uses oral history interviews I have conducted with al-Qassam's family: his grandsons Ahmad al-Qassam (in Jenin) and 'Abd al-Samad al-Qassam (from Beirut), as well as Muhammad al-Wasfi of Ya'bad, a descendant of one of al-Qassam's followers. I have also relied on interviews conducted by other researchers with surviving Qassamites, including Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir and Muhammad Hanafi, as well as al-Qassam's wife, Amina al-Qassam.⁵

I have also made extensive use of colonial archives toward two ends: providing more context for al-Qassam's activities against the French, British, and Zionists, and creating a more nuanced understanding of the colonial administrations. Ottoman state records have also provided some insight into al-Qassam's family and the town of Jabla, and here I consulted the Ottoman *Salname* for Beirut at the turn of the century. For British colonial (government) sources I used the Air Ministry (Air), Foreign Office (FO), War Office (WO), and Colonial Office (CO) files housed at the National Archives in Kew, as well as the daily and weekly summaries from the Criminal Investigation Department of the Palestine Police, housed in the India Office Records at the British Library. For French colonial sources I relied largely on intelligence reports from the "Service de Renseignements," which are housed at the French diplomatic archives in Nantes, and the Ministry of Defense archives in Vincennes. Lastly, British colonial sources that were seized in Palestine in 1948 and Zionist intelligence reports are housed at the Israeli State Archives, while the Political Bureau files of the Jewish Agency are at the Central Zionist Archives, both in Jerusalem. Haganah Intelligence files were accessed at the Haganah Archives in Tel Aviv.

The personal papers and memoirs of colonial administrators and police officers have also provided a powerful (though flawed) source. The Middle East Centre Archives at St. Antony's College, Oxford, contain a number of personal papers and some archives of the Palestine Police force, the most important of which are the papers belonging to Sir Charles Tegart. Other personal papers were consulted at the Imperial War Museum

Archives in London. I viewed the files of prominent Palestinian lawyer Henry Cattán at the Israeli State Archives. The papers of Haifa's Jewish community were consulted at the Haifa Municipal Archives.

Through both Ahmad al-Qassam and 'Abd al-Samad al-Qassam, I have been able to review a number of documents that I have described as the personal papers of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam. Though rich in some details, they are fleetingly few in number.

An important category of sources that I used for this book are the contemporary accounts from Arabic, Hebrew, English, and French newspapers. The press in Palestine is particularly revelatory in that these papers were so unabashedly factional. Their support for one nationalist faction over another provides an opportunity to understand the way different political parties conceived of the Palestinian and Arab political community at large. Getting access to editions of Arabic newspapers from the mandate is a difficult endeavor. Most archives that have some editions also have significant gaps. The University of Chicago and the National Library of Israel have placed a number of the newspapers on microfilm. The British Library's Endangered Archives Program has digitized a number of Palestinian newspapers, though there are many gaps in the coverage. The *Palestine Post* and *Palestine Bulletin* have been digitized and are available online through a project of the National Library of Israel.

Last, a source too often neglected by historians in these discussions: what Simon Schama has described as the "archive of the feet." I have walked the grounds of al-Azhar to see where 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam studied; I've visited al-Istiqlal Mosque to see where he preached and Balad al-Shaykh to see where his body lies buried. Finally, I've hiked the forests and valleys of the Marj Ibn 'Amr and traversed the 1967 Green Line to Ya'bad to see where he was killed. My privileged position as a white scholar at one of North America's finest universities has given me access to a number of places that many of my counterparts—especially those in the Arab world, Palestinians in particular—are unable to ever see. I hope that this circumstance changes.

NOTES

Prologue

- 1 From E. Porter Horne, *A Job Well Done (Being a History of the Palestine Police Force 1920–1948)* (East Sussex, UK: Book Guild, 2003), 183n13.
- 2 As with much of the details from that day and the weeks that followed, many of the facts are in dispute: other sources insist that Rosenfeld was ordered to surrender but refused. On this point, see ‘Abd al-Rahman Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah* (Damascus: Dar al-Jil li-l-Taba‘a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi‘, 1991), 48; Muhammad Muhammad Hasan Shurrah, *Hayfa: Jarat al-Karmil wa-‘Arus Filastin* (Amman: al-Ahliyya, 2006), 97.
- 3 Details about the discovery of the body and the nearby encampment are found in the *Palestine Post* newspaper report of November 8, 1935, p. 1.

Introduction

- 1 For British views, see their official communiqué published in the *Palestine Post*, November 21, 1935, 1. For the Yishuv’s perspective, see “The Fight with the Arab Terrorists.” (In Hebrew) Report from E. S. [Eliyahu Sasson], November 21, 1935, S25/3473 (CZA).
- 2 ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘Aman ma‘a al-Qafila al-Arabiyya: Mudhakkirat ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid* (Beirut: Dar al-Istiqlal, 1993), 182; Awad Halabi writes that “in the political environment of British-ruled Palestine . . . symbols and imagery could become surreptitious tools to articulate the unspoken concerns of the larger Arab population.” This is clearly not a case of concerns being “unspoken,” but Halabi’s argument is germane in the sense that symbols such as flags and banners were *already* particularly contested tools within the Arab Palestinian political vocabulary during the mandate years. Awad Halabi, “Symbols of Hegemony and Resistance: Banners and Flags in British-Ruled Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 36 (2009): 68.
- 3 Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Hamas), “Mithaq Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya Filastin — ‘Hamas,’” reproduced in *Al-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya bayna Mithaqayn: al-Mithaq al-Watani al-Filastini wa-l-Mithaq Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya (Hamas)*, ed. Anas ‘Abd al-Rahman (Kuwait: Maktabat Dar al-Bayan, 1989), 98. Whiggish historical sense aside, the Covenant of Hamas also states that al-Qassam’s death was in 1936 — an echo of the rechronologizing Ted Swedenburg would note in popular memories of the 1936–1939 Revolt. See Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–39 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 104–105.
- 4 *Filastin*, July 12, 1936. This cartoon is analyzed in Sandy Sufian, “Anatomy of the 1936–

- 39 Revolt: Images of the Body in Political Cartoons of Mandatory Palestine,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, no. 2 (2008): 32–34.
- 5 Sufian, “Anatomy of the 1936–39 Revolt,” 32.
- 6 Ted Swedenburg, “Al-Qassam Remembered,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 7 (1987): 9.
- 7 See, inter alia, Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1982); Abdul-Wahhab Said Kayyali, *Palestine: A Modern History* (London: Croom Helm, 1968); Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1996). Similarly, in French see Ghassan el-Khazen, *La grande révolte arabe de 1936 en Palestine* (Éditions Dar an-Nahar, 2005); Henry Laurens, *La question de Palestine*, vol. 2: *Une mission sacrée de civilisation* (Paris: Fayard, 1999).
- 8 S. Abdullah Schleifer, “The Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” *Islamic Quarterly* 5, no. 23 (1979); Shai Lachman, “Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929–1939: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement,” in *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, ed. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia Kedourie (London: F. Cass, 1982); Basheer M. Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997). The most recent biography of al-Qassam in English is based on initial research conducted for this book: Mark Sanagan, “Teacher, Preacher, Soldier, Martyr: Rethinking ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam,” *Die Welt des Islams* 53, no. 3–4 (2013).
- 9 As Rochelle Davis has described in relation to the appearance of Palestinian village books at the same time, the mid-1980s saw an increased interest on the part of Palestinians in historical narratives that differed from those put forward by the PLO and their patrons among neighboring Arab states. Rochelle A. Davis, *Palestinian Village Histories: Geographies of the Displaced* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 50–52; Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jam‘iyat al-Dirasat al-‘Arabiyya, 1985); ‘Abd al-Sattar Qasim, *Al-Shaykh al-Mujahid ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Beirut: Dar al-Umma al-Nashr, 1984); Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hut, *Al-Shaykh al-Mujahid ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam fi Tarikh Filastin* (Beirut: Dar al-Istiqlal li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 1987).
- 10 Ted Swedenburg, “Al-Qassam Remembered,” 10–14; Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 15; Qasim, *Al-Shaykh al-Mujahid ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam*, 24; al-Hut, *Al-Shaykh al-Mujahid ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam fi Tarikh Filastin*, 68. This assessment is partly unfair to Hammuda, who produced the most detailed biography on al-Qassam in any language. While Swedenburg is correct in suggesting that Hammuda used al-Qassam as an example of a figure of admiration in an Islamist sense, it doesn’t detract from the merit of the work’s scholarly command of sources.
- 11 Such work includes Muhammad Muhammad Hasan Shurrab, *‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam: Shaykh al-Mujahidin fi Filastin* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2000); Husam al-Din Bulbul, *‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam wa-Safahat min Tarikh Bilad al-Sham* (Beirut: Dar al-Nufas, 2014); ‘Abd al-Qadir Yasin, ed., *‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam: al-Qa’id al-Watani al-Mubdi’* (Cairo: Maktabat Jazirat al-Ward, 2010).
- 12 Muhsin Salih, “Al-Qassam wa-l-Tajriba al-Qassamiyya,” *Al-Jazeera*, December 16, 2010, accessed August 6, 2011, www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/1819EAD9-BFF6-4CDE-9057-0A89FF0FF6003.

- 13 See Edmund Burke III and David N. Yaghoubian, eds., *Struggle and Survival in the Modern Middle East*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); Mark LeVine and Gershon Shafir, eds., *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 12–13.
- 14 Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 271.
- 15 On the connection between states, their geographic boundaries, and national identities, see Sahlins, *Boundaries*; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006), 170–178.

Chapter 1: The Guide

- 1 Samuel Lyde, *The Ansyreeh and Ismaeleeh: A Visit to the Secret Sects of Northern Syria, with the View to the Establishment of Schools* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1853), 228. For more on Lyde's period among the 'Alawites, see his reports to the British government: "Report on the Ansyreeh by the Rev. S. Lyde, 1852," FO 226/117. For more on the shooting in Palestine, see Moshe Ma'oz, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840–1861: The Impact of the Tanzimat on Politics and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 226–228.
- 2 Ellen Clare Miller, *Eastern Sketches: Notes of Scenery, Schools, and Tent Life in Syria and Palestine* (Edinburgh: W. Oliphant, 1871); Richard Pococke, *A Description of the East, and Some Other Countries . . . Observations on Egypt*, vol. II (London: W. Boyer, 1743), 198; Henry Maundrell, *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter, A.D. 1697*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Printed at the Theater, 1707), 13; Abu al-Baq'a ibn al-Jay'an, *Al-Qawl al-Mustazraf fi Safar Mawlana al-Malik al-Ashraf: Aw Rihlat Qayitbay ila Bilad al-Sham, 882h/1477m* (Tripoli, Lebanon: Manshurat Jarrus Baras, 1984), 57 ("āhalihu k-al-bihāim"). Some medieval Arab geographers such as Ibn Batuta and al-Idrisi are, unsurprisingly, far more kind. Al-Idrisi describes the town as "small but beautiful" in his *Kitab Nuzhat al-Mushtaq fi Ikhtiraq al-Afaq*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqafa al-Diniyya, 1990), 644.
- 3 Lyde, *Ansyreeh and Ismaeleeh*, 228.
- 4 Russell Jones, "Ibrahim b. Adham," in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1993). For more on *sh'abān*—the month that precedes Ramadan in the Muslim calendar—and its centrality to the pilgrimage to Jabla, see Antoine Abdel Nour, *Introduction à l'histoire urbaine de la Syrie ottomane (XVIe–XVIIIe siècle)* (Beirut: Lebanese University, 1982), 330. For a description of the mosque's state in the 1880s, see Vital Cuinet, *Syrie, Liban et Palestine: Géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive, et raisonnée* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1896), 167.
- 5 For a detailed map of the *sūq* from the early decades of the twentieth century, see Jacques Weulersse, *Le pays des alaouites* (Tours: Arrault et Cie, 1940), 287.
- 6 Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 51.
- 7 This mountain range has historically been known by a number of different names,

most commonly Jibal al-Nusayria and Jibal al-ʿAlawiyyin, referencing the ʿAlawite sect that makes up the majority of the population residing in the villages along the western slopes. See Muhammad Amin Ghalib al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-ʿAlawiyyin* (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1966), 391; Al-Tawil actually states that Selim I killed millions (“*mala-yin*”) of ʿAlawites from Mosul to Egypt, but this is likely an overstatement. For more on the ʿAlawites, see Yaron Friedman, *The Nuṣayrī-ʿAlawīs: An Introduction to the Religion, History, and Identity of the Leading Minority in Syria* (Boston: Brill, 2010).

8 For a detailed account of the rise of Beirut as an important Ottoman city in the eighteenth century, see Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). For statistics about the villages surrounding Jabla, see Cuinet, *Syrie*, 166. Cuinet writes that the town of Jabla had a population of about three thousand and notes that the district of Jabla included four large villages and 247 smaller villages and hamlets. The Ottoman provincial yearbook (*Salname*) for 1894 contains the government’s view of Jabla’s economic situation during al-Qassam’s youth. See “Conditions of Trade and Industry” in *Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut: 1311–1312 Hicri Senesi (1894) Defʿa 1* (Beirut: Beyrut Vilayet Matbaası, [1894]), 425. For notes on farming produce, see Muhammad Kurd ʿAli, *Khitat al-Sham*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIlm li-l-Malayin, 1969), 156–157; Owen, *Middle East in the World Economy*, 98. See also Kurd ʿAli, *Khitat al-Sham*, vol. 5, 217–222.

9 See Cuinet, *Syrie*, 166; Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population 1830–1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 176 (here, Jabla is transliterated from the Ottoman as “Cebile”); Justin McCarthy, *Population History of the Middle East and the Balkans* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2002), 189. McCarthy’s revision of the population from the early 1910s shows a more reasonable population increase, but the fact that so many avoided the census remains important. One explanation could be logistical: the time difference between the collecting of village *deftars* that were compiled into a district tally and the point at which these numbers were “published” could be up to a decade. See McCarthy, *Population History*, 175. For a critique of Cuinet, see McCarthy, *Population History*, 174. For religious statistics in the Ottoman censuses, see Karpat, *Ottoman Population*, 176. For the issue of ʿAlawites in census, see al-Tawil, *Tarikh al-ʿAlawiyyin*. Again, there are no statistics for ʿAlawite populations in the towns of Latakia. However, in the 1970s, despite the political ascendance of ʿAlawites from Latakia to the highest positions in the Baathist regime, only a quarter of their population lived in the urban centers of the district. See Tord Olsson, “The Gnosis of Mountaineers and Townspeople: The Religion of the Syrian ʿAlawites, or Nuṣairis,” in *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives*, ed. Tord Olsson, Elisabeth Özdalga, and Catharina Raudvere (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1998), 201. The other ethnic minority was a group of about one hundred fifty Circassian families who were relocated to Jabla by the Ottoman authorities following the Russian invasion of central Asia in 1864. See Sato Tsugitaka, *The Syrian Coastal Town of Jabala: Its History and Present Situation* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1988), 18.

10 ʿAlawite groups were often fighting each other as well. Distinctions between urban

and rural communities were compounded by clan, tribal, and confederacy distinctions within the 'Alawite sect. Internecine violence among these latter groupings was common in the mountains above Jabla during the nineteenth century.

- 11 On the relations between average Sunni Muslims and 'Alawites during this period, see Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 69; he is less circumspect, describing the urban Sunni population as "prejudiced." The tension between the Ottoman authorities and the urbanized 'Alawites is markedly different from other forms of ethnic strife that characterized much of the mid-nineteenth century. But the violence that took place between Muslims and Christians in Damascus and Aleppo was unlikely to have had much impact on Jabla. With its tiny Christian community and relative isolation from the urban centers to the east of the Coastal Mountains or south in Jabal Druze, Jabla would have been a much slower pot to boil. Instead, those most likely to have been the first to learn of the riots and massacres are those least likely to have wanted such events to be repeated. Merchants and 'ulama' had been at the forefront in sheltering Christians or negotiating solutions to the violence in Aleppo and Damascus. There are no records to indicate that Jabla suffered from such confessional antagonisms.
- 12 This is the classic formulation first put forward by Albert Hourani in 1966. It has since been revisited in different ways. See Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," in *The Modern Middle East: A Reader*, ed. Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury, and Mary C. Wilson (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). For a survey of the work and its critics, see James Gelvin, "The 'Politics of the Notables' Forty Years After," *Middle East Studies Bulletin* 40, no. 1 (June 2006). For the ways in which Hourani's essay has been used to further a specifically "Localist-Arabist" tendency in the historiography, see Ehud Toledano, "Ottoman-Local Elites," in *Middle Eastern Politics and Ideas: A History from Within*, ed. Ilan Pappé and Moshe Ma'oz (London: I. B. Tauris, 1997). See also Toledano, "Ottoman-Local Elites," 155; Gelvin, "Politics of the Notables," 26.

One other caveat in the "Politics of the Notables": some scholars, in revising Hourani's initial thesis, have defined new conceptual categories of people who would have traditionally been labeled under the rubric of "*a'yān*." Julie Clancy-Smith makes the distinction between the elites who drew their authority from their relationship with the state (either support of or opposition to) and religious elites for whom a different set of markers of nobility applied. Adel Manna makes a similar case in distinguishing the "socio-religious" from those who had been appointed governors or had military skills. See Julia Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Popular Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800–1904)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 270n4; Adel Manna, "Change and Continuity in the Socio-Political Elite in Palestine during the Late Ottoman Period," in *The Syrian Land in the 18th and 19th Century: The Common and the Specific in the Historical Experience*, ed. Thomas Philipp (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992). See also James Reilly, *A Small Town in Syria: Ottoman Hama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 26.

- 13 Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Reilly, *Small Town in Syria*, 120–121.
- 14 S. Abdullah Schleifer, "The Life and Thought of 'Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam," *Islamic Quar-*

- terly 5, no. 23 (1979): 62; Basheer M. Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 186. 'Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam was also an appointed member of the town's Instructional Branch, as will be discussed below.
- 15 Schleifer, "Life and Thought of 'Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam," 62; Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam," 186.
 - 16 For more on the origins of the Qadiriyya, see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 216; J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 41. While acknowledging its unprecedented spread, Trimingham argues that the expansion and popularity of the Qadiriyya in the sixteenth century has been overstated. The Hanbali school of jurisprudence (*madhhab*) is considered the most traditionalist, textual school and is typically the *madhhab* to which Salafis who revere the example of Ibn Taymiyya subscribe. While 'Abd al-Qadir's personal austerity made him more popular among Muslims who were typically suspicious or openly hostile to the intoxicated forms of Sufism, as centuries passed, hagiographies of 'Abd al-Qadir inflated his saintliness in ways that were typical of the founders of the more antinomian orders.
 - 17 Trimingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 42.
 - 18 The Qadiri dhikr —like most mystical practices—assumed different forms in different places under different *murshid*. But the spread of the order across the Mashriq was facilitated by the common resemblance to everyday Muslim practice. The Qadiriyya thus offered a safer introduction to mysticism for many Muslims, and in particular the 'ulama', than previous or concurrent antinomian versions. For the British report, see Consul-General Playfair to the Marquis of Salisbury, "Algerian Consul-General Robert Lambert Playfair, Algiers, April 10, 1889," FO 27/2964 (BNA).
 - 19 On the rise of organized Sufi orders, see Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 202. See also John Glover, *Sufism and Jihad in Modern Senegal: The Murid Order* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 47.
 - 20 Hodgson, *Venture of Islam*, vol. 2, 221.
 - 21 Despite the popularity of the Naqshbandiyya during the Ottoman Empire, the order has received significantly less scholarly attention than smaller, localized Sufi orders. This, Hamid Algar has hypothesized, may in part be a result of historians of religion's assumption that the marginal, older, and more esoteric Sufi orders were somehow more genuinely "mystical" than an order that places so much importance on Islamic legal orthodoxy. On this point, see Hamid Algar, "The Present State of Naqshbandi Studies," in *Naqshbandis: Cheminements et situation actuelle d'un ordre mystique musulman, actes de la Table Ronde de Sèvres*, ed. Marc Gaborieau, Alexandre Popovic, and Thierry Zarcone (Istanbul: ISIS Yayimcilik Ltd., 1990). Itzhak Weismann has since produced a number of important contributions to our understanding of the Naqshbandiyya, yet he remains one of the few scholars actively writing about the order. See Itzhak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a World-wide Sufi Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2007). On the origins of the Naqshbandiyya and their relations with other orders, see Hamid Algar, "A Brief History of the Naqsh-

- bandi Order,” in *Naqshbandis*, ed. Gaborieau, Popovic, and Zarcone, 7. Alternately, there have also been intense rivalries between the two Sufi orders (or, more accurately, between families designated as representatives of those *ṭurūq*). In the mid- to late nineteenth century in the area around Mosul in present-day Iraq, the Qadiriyya and the Naqshbandiyya maintained one such rivalry with shaykhly families representing both sides. On this, see Gökhan Çetinsaya, “The Caliph and the Shaykhs: Abdülhamid II’s Policy towards the Qadiriyya of Mosul,” in *Ottoman Reform and Muslim Regeneration: Studies in Honour of Butrus Abu-Manneh*, ed. Itzhak Weismann and Fruma Zachs (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2005), 99.
- 22 For more on the relations between the order and the Ottoman government, see Hamid Algar, “Political Aspects of Naqshbandi History,” in *Naqshbandis*, ed. Gaborieau, Popovic, and Zarcone. Al-Bukhari traveled to Istanbul and Damascus from Samarkand near the end of the seventeenth century and established *zawaya* and a permanent Naqshbandi presence in those two cities. That permanence “radiated throughout Syria and Palestine largely through the auspices of his physical descendants.” These descendants were most notably represented in the guise of the Muradi family, ‘ulama’ in Damascus who held important Ottoman positions in the city until the outbreak of the First World War. See Algar, “Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order,” 27. Shaykh Khalid was also known as Khalid Shahrazuri. F. de Jong reports that his lineal following included Muhammad Tahir al-Husayni, the Ottoman *qāḍī* and mufti of Jerusalem whose son Amin would take the mantle of Palestinian leadership during the British Mandate, as well as ‘Abd Allah Basha, the governor of the Ottoman vilayet of Akka (Acre). See Frederic De Jong, “The Naqshbandiyya in Egypt and Syria: Aspects of Its History, and Observations Concerning Its Present-Day Condition,” in *Naqshbandis*, ed. Gaborieau, Popovic, and Zarcone. The relationship between the Naqshbandiyya-Khalidiyya and the sultan waned when the Khalidis suspected that the Ottoman state was less willing to uphold the shari‘a during the period of the Tanzimat. See Algar, “Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order,” 30. On the relationship with Abdülhamid II, see Algar, “Political Aspects of Naqshbandi History,” 140.
- 23 For the number of Tekkes in Istanbul, see Trimmingham, *Sufi Orders in Islam*, 95. Quotation from Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 3.
- 24 For the order’s influence on Ottoman politics, see Feroz Ahmad, “Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 27, no. 1 (1991): 5–7. For a history of the Shaykh Sa‘id rebellion, see Robert Olson, *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).
- 25 Both quotations from Hamid Algar, “Silent and Vocal *Dhikr* in the Naqshbandi Order,” in *Akten des VII. Kongresses für Arabistik und Islamwissenschaft. Göttingen, 15 bis. 22 August 1974*, ed. Albert Dietrich (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 40.
- 26 On the Naqshbandi’s promotion of Muslim governance by shari‘a alone, see Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 1. It should be noted that how the concept of “solitude in the crowd” was actually interpreted by individual Naqshbandi *zawaya* likely differed over time and space. See Weismann, *Naqshbandiyya*, 11; Algar, “Political Aspects of Naqshbandi History,” 152.
- 27 This quotation is taken from Sirhindi’s *Maktubat*, vol. 1, and is translated in Algar,

“Brief History of the Naqshbandi Order,” 22–23. For more on the life and thought of Sirhindi, see Arthur F. Buehler, *Revealed Grace: The Juristic Sufism of Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624)* (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 2011).

Chapter 2: The City of a Thousand Minarets

- 1 “The adept to his Shaykh is like a corpse in the hands of a corpse-washer” is a common quotation attributed to multiple Sufi traditions. See Itzhak Weismann, *The Naqshbandiyya: Orthodoxy and Activism in a Worldwide Sufi Tradition* (London: Routledge, 2007), 5; Frederick Mathewson Denny, *An Introduction to Islam* (New York: Macmillan, 1994), 246.
- 2 On the destruction of local guilds and the social repercussions, see ‘Abd al-Karim Rafiq, “Craft Organization, Work Ethics, and the Strains of Change in Ottoman Syria,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 111, no. 3 (1991). On production increases, see Roger Owen, *The Middle East in the World Economy, 1800–1914* (New York: Methuen, 1981), 79. On the shrinking populations in urban centers—in part attributable to the destruction of manufacturing guilds in these cities—see I. M. Smilanskaya, “From Subsistence to Market Economy,” in *The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800–1914*, ed. Charles Issawi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). On the siege of Latakia and the pacification campaign, see Yasir Sari, *Safahat min Tarikh al-Ladhiqiyya* (Damascus: Manshurat Wizarat al-Thaqafa, 1992), 81–93.
- 3 On the Hama locust infestation, see James A. Reilly, *A Small Town in Syria: Ottoman Hama in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 74.
- 4 While Tanzimat literally means “reordering,” the period is generally described as one of “reform.” This term, though, has increasingly been challenged in the last decade by some Ottomanists, who argue that while it is more favorable than previous concepts such as “modernization,” it still implies a value judgment of “improvement” over local methods of governance. In fact, many of the dictates of the Tanzimat were simply designed to strengthen Istanbul’s control over the empire. Further, there is no doubt that provisions of the Tanzimat that were explicitly designed to favor European proxy communities in the empire were done so at the behest of those European powers and yet were framed within the discourse of “reform.” With that caveat, I’ve elected to use the term “reform” here, as it remains the consensus term for the period. For a discussion of this terminology, see Christoph Neumann, “Ottoman Provincial Towns from the Eighteenth to the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2002), 132. Quotation comes from Roger Owen, *Middle East in the World Economy*, 153.
- 5 Quotation and statistics from Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700–1922* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 62–64.
- 6 I use the term “secularize” here to signal the attempts to remove education from the authority of religious institutions, not an attempt to remove religion from education. The undermining of the ‘ulama’s hold over education was not the sole purpose of these education reforms either. A centralized education system under the control

- of Ottoman administrators or their proxies would be better able to gear curriculum toward strengthening the empire in the face of their many nineteenth-century challenges. This goal, needless to say, intersects with the desire to weaken the power of local notables.
- 7 For a list of some of the prominent *madāris* in Damascus, Aleppo, and various “country” schools, see Muhammad Kurd ‘Ali, *Khitat al-Sham*, vol. 6 (Beirut: Dar al-‘Ilm li-l-Malayin, 1969), 66–129.
 - 8 Correspondence from governor Rashid Nāshid Pasha to Abdülhamid’s palace, dated December 15, 1887. Listed as Y. Mtv. 29/48 #1, 29 (15 Dec. 1887), quoted in Benjamin Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 59.
 - 9 Selim Deringil, “Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: The Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876–1909),” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (1991): 346.
 - 10 For more on this characterization of Abdülhamid’s reign in regard to education policy, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 109–111. On Mekteb i-Mülkiyye see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*; Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876–1909* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 93–111. On the class dimension of education policy, see William L. Cleveland and Martin Bunton, *History of the Modern Middle East*, 4th ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2009), 92. On standardized curriculum, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 10.
 - 11 Bruce Masters, *The Arabs of the Ottoman Empire, 1516–1918: A Social and Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 111.
 - 12 On the participation of the ‘ulama’ in curricular development, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 13. On Jam‘iyat al-Maqasid al-Khayriyya al-Islamiyya, see Jens Hanssen, *Fin de siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 169. Quotation from Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut*, 170.
 - 13 On elementary schools in Latakia, see Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839–1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 158. On the education commission, see Somel, *Modernization of Public Education*, 103. It’s not entirely clear how these commissions differed in practice from the work done by the benevolent societies, as over time throughout Bilad al-Sham these two bodies were recorded in similar ways in the district notebooks.
 - 14 ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Qassam’s name appears in *Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut: 1311–1312 Hicri Senesi* (1894) Def‘a 1 (Beirut: Beyrut Vilayet Matbaası, 1894). The appointment of an inspector is noted in Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 84. Latakia had an average of one (boys’) state school per kaza. The only Arab center with a higher density of such schools was Aleppo, with an average of 1.07 schools per kaza. Beirut and Acre, the next-best-served sanjaks in the province, were markedly below Latakia’s average. Latakia, along with Beirut and Tripoli, also had the highest density of the equivalent girls’ schools in the Arab provinces. See Somel, *Modernization of Public Education*, appendix 14, p. 359, and appendix 15, p. 36. On ‘Alawite conversion, see Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 84.
 - 15 On the opening of new Islamic schools, see Donald J. Cioeta, “Islamic Benevolent Societies and Public Education in Ottoman Syria, 1875–1882,” *Islamic Quarterly* 26,

- no. 1 (January 1982): 45. For more on the challenge to missionary schooling, see Sari, *Safahat min Tarikh al-Ladhiqiyya*, 100. The traveling ‘ulama’ was a practice that was likely initiated by ranking ‘ulama’ themselves as an opportunity to evangelize. The construction of carriage roads between the urban centers and small outposts certainly facilitated them on this course. See Emine Ö. Evered, *Empire and Education under the Ottomans: Politics, Reform and Resistance from the Tanzimat to the Young Turks* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 124. On the use of ‘ulama’ in Syrian provincial towns by Sultan Abdülhamid II, see Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*, 93–95. On the end of the traveling ‘ulama’ practice, see Evered, *Empire and Education*, 120.
- 16 In reference to Shaykh Salim Tabbara, see S. Abdullah Schleifer, “The Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” *Islamic Quarterly* 5, no. 23 (1979): 62; Basheer M. Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 186. Schleifer refers to Tabbara as “Tayyara,” which Nafi points out is an error. See also David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 14.
- 17 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut: 1311–1312 Hicri Senesi (1894) Def‘a 1*.
- 18 There remains some mystery as to when al-Qassam began his studies. Khalaf suggests that he was in Cairo between 1899 and 1906, while Nafi says 1902 and 1908 and Hammuda says 1904. See ‘Ali Husayn Khalaf, “Tajribat ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam al-Suriya, 1882–1921,” *Shu‘un Filastiniyya* 124 (1982): 19; Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam.” This description of al-Azhar in 1900 is taken largely from Ahmad Amin, *My Life: The Autobiography of an Egyptian Scholar, Writer and Cultural Leader*, trans. Issa J. Boulatta (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 41–42.
- 19 For information on al-Qassam’s arrival, see Nafi, “‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam,” 186. ‘Izz al-Din al-Tanukhi was from a notable family of Damascus ‘ulama’. His family was originally a prominent Druze family from the town of ‘Abay in Mount Lebanon, before ‘Izz al-Din’s grandfather moved his branch to Damascus in the early nineteenth century. He would reappear throughout al-Qassam’s life, often in moments of great need. Al-Qassam relied on him in 1920 in particular, as his insurgency against the French came to an end and he needed to escape to Palestine. See Muhammad Kamil al-Qassab and Muhammad ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan fi Daf‘a Awham Khuziran*, ed. Muhammad Zuhayr al-Shawish (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2001), 19n2. Despite the lamentation from Frederic Penfield, the American consul-general to Egypt in 1897, that “unless one be familiar with Arabic and knows where to look among musty books and manuscripts in the Egyptian Library, it is very difficult to get reliable information regarding this wonderful mosque-college,” there are rich sources available that describe al-Azhar at the time. The following descriptions are drawn from multiple sources, including Frederic Courtland Penfield, *Present-Day Egypt* (New York: The Century Co., 1907) (above quotation on 59); Amin, *My Life*, chapters 9–10; Taha Husayn, *The Stream of Days: A Student at the Azhar*, vol. 2 of *Ayyam*, trans. Hilary Wayment (New York: Longmans, Green, 1948); Bayard Dodge, *Al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning* (Washington: Middle East Institute, 1961). Appendix III of Dodge’s book contains the names of the six principal doors and their locations as well as the names and provenance of the five remaining minarets. Dodge, *Al-Azhar*, 195–196.

- 20 Al-Azhar, like the elementary and secondary schools of Bilad al-Sham, was subjected to similar pressures related to the arrival of missionary schools and reforms to the educational system in the Ottoman Empire. See Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 80–82.
- 21 Husayn, *Stream of Days*, 10.
- 22 Dodge, *Al-Azhar*, 202.
- 23 An American physician in Cairo published a report on the cholera outbreak in Egypt in 1896, suggesting that the sources of the disease were likely the Hajj pilgrimage and the intermixing of Cairene Muslims with Indian Muslims, both issues of relevance for the authorities at al-Azhar. See Edward Bedloe and James F. Love, “Cholera in Egypt,” *Public Health Reports* (1896–1970) 11, no. 37 (September 11, 1896); “Riots at El Azhar,” Lord Cromer to Marquess of Salisbury, June 6, 1896. FO 407/137/223 (BNA).
- 24 Amin, *My Life*, 43.
- 25 See Amin, *My Life*. On new entry standards see “Council of al-Azhar, (6 al-Hijra 1331),” L/PJ/6/1330 (IOR).
- 26 Description of students is given in Dodge, *Al-Azhar*, 97. Surveillance of students is outlined in Penfield, *Present-Day Egypt*, 65.
- 27 Bread loaf statistic from Muhammad ‘Abd Allah ‘Inan, *Tarikh al-Jami’a al-Azhar* (Cairo: al-Muassasat al-Khanji, 1958), 282. ‘Inan also supplies a budget for the school, saying that in 1901 the school maintained a budget of forty thousand British pounds.
- 28 Both Schleifer’s and Khalaf’s accounts come from ‘Izz al-Din al-Tanukhi via Muhammad al-Qassam. See Schleifer, “Life and Thought,” 62; Khalaf, “Tajribat al-Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam al-Suriya,” 20–21.
- 29 For a description of al-Qassam as a student, see for instance Zuhayr al-Mardini, *Alf yawm ma’ al-Hajj Amin* (Beirut: Dar al-‘Irfan, 1977), 981.
- 30 For the classic texts in English on Muhammad ‘Abduh, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 130–160; Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966). For an account in Arabic by ‘Abduh’s close associate, see Rashid Rida, *Tarikh al-Ustadh al-Imam al-Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh*, vol. 1 (Cairo: Matba’at al-Manar, 1925). For details on ‘Abduh at al-Azhar and the response from the school’s other ‘ulama’, see “Viscount Cromer—Annual Report for 1898,” FO 407/150 (BNA); Rida, *Tarikh al-Ustadh al-Imam al-Shaykh Muhammad ‘Abduh*, 503.
- 31 While the different trends within Salafism actually vary widely in terms of ideology and points of historical origin, the general thread of the movements relates to Muslim society returning to the guiding principles of *al-salaf al-salih*. Some Salafi variations harken back to a fourteenth-century theologian, Ibn Taymiyya, and his legal opinions on everything from the Muslimness of the Mongols to the attributes of God. Centuries later, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab would draw heavily on Ibn Taymiyya in leading the religious movement that animated the expansion of the Emirate of Dir‘iya, the first Saudi state, and inspiring the religious doctrine that continues to dominate the ‘ulama’ in the kingdom.

On the other hand, three Salafi circles emerged at the end of the nineteenth cen-

ture in Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo. This chapter deals largely with the type of Salafism found in these urban centers, in particular the Salafi community in Cairo around Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida, and the Salafi community in Damascus around Jamal al-Din al-Qasimi, 'Umar al-Baytar, and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Maghribi. The best source on this latter period is David Dean Commins, *Islamic Reform: Politics and Social Change in Late Ottoman Syria* (New York: Oxford University Press), 1990. One of the earliest discussions of Salafism can be found in Henri Laoust, "Le Réformisme orthodoxe des 'Salafiya' et les caractères généraux de son orientation actuelle," *Revue des Études Islamiques* 6 (1932).

- 32 Besides the ideological basis for the Salafi 'ulama' challenge to the "traditional" 'ulama' as gatekeepers of Islamic jurisprudence, there were practical, prosaic grievances at play as well. These came to the fore near the turn of the century and will be discussed later in this chapter.
- 33 Among those claiming that al-Qassam was a student of 'Abduh's or Rida's are 'Abd al-Sattar Qasim, *Al-Shaykh al-Mujahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Beirut: Dar al-Umma al-Nashr, 1984), and Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hut, *Al-Shaykh al-Mujahid 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam fi Tarikh Filastin* (Beirut: Dar al-Istiqlal li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 1987). For the reference to the interview with Maymana al-Qassam, see Muhammad 'Ali Hullah, "Juhud al-Azhar al-Sharif fi Da'm Qadayat Filastin wa-l-Quds al-Sharif," *Majallat al-Azhar* 70, no. 4 (August 1997). Finally, see Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 222.
- 34 In fact, "Sufism" is likely not the right term at all; "neo-Sufism" may be more appropriate. Even Ibn Taymiyya, arch-Salafi for some of the most conservative strands of the movement, was complimentary toward Sufis. In his *al-Sufiyya wa al-Fuqara'*, he wrote: "After the prophets there is no one more virtuous in their opinion than the Sufi, but he is in fact a type of righteous one. Thus, he is the righteous one distinguished by the asceticism and worship in which they [the ascetics] strive diligently (*ijtihadu*). He is the righteous man of the path, just as it is said, 'the righteous ones of the 'ulama' and 'the righteous ones of the amirs.' Hence, he is more specific than absolutely righteous. . . ." For Ibn Taymiyya, then (some evidence shows he may have been a follower of the Qadiri *ṭarīqa*), the Sufi is righteous when he strives for a greater knowledge of God within the confines of what is permissible in the shari'a. Quotation from Th. E. Homerin, "Ibn Taimiya's *Al-Sufiyya wa al-Fuqarā'*," *Arabica* 32, no. 2 (July 1985): 231–232. For another example of a modernist understanding of the mystical traditions, see the discussion of 'Abd al-Hamid al-Zahravi's text *Jurisprudence and Sufism* in Commins, *Islamic Reform*, 55–59. See also Itzhak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafism, and Arabism in late Ottoman Damascus* (Boston: Brill, 2001).

Chapter 3: The Soldier Shaykh

- 1 'Abd al-Rahman Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah* (Damascus: Dar al-Jil li-l-Taba'a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi', 1991), 47.
- 2 His connection to al-Mansuri is reported in Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 47. By the time he had returned to Jabla, his father, 'Abd al-Qadir, had been elected as a member (*A'za-i müntahab*) to the sub-district administrative coun-

- cil (*meclis idare-i kazā*). Most indications are that the elected members of the Ottoman kaza council were simply appointed by the governor, though at least at the kaza level there may have been actual elections. See *Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut: 1324 Hicri Senesi* (1906) Defʿa 6 (Beirut: Beyrut Vilayet Matbaasi, 1906), 213. On the classes he taught at the Qadiri *ṭarīqa*, see Basheer M. Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 187. On teaching both adults and children, see Zuhayr al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm maʿ al-Hajj Amin* (Beirut: Dar al-ʿIrfan, 1977), 981.
- 3 There is a dearth of scholarship on this period, in particular from the Ottoman points of view. For a general overview of the war and the context within the Ottoman politics of the day, see account in chapter 1 of Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2015). One of the few texts in Arabic that is readily accessible on the conflict is Rifʿat ʿAbd al-ʿAziz Ahmad and Muhammad al-Tuwayr, *Tarikh al-Jihad fi Libiya didda al-Ghazw al-Itali, 1911–1931m* (Cairo: Markaz al-Hadara al-Arabiyya, 2005). Some of the notable exceptions to the absence of Ottoman officials involved in the fighting include the leadership displayed both before and during the fighting by Ottoman army officers such as Mustafa Kemal, future president of the Turkish Republic, and ʿAziz ʿAli al-Misri, an ardent Arab nationalist and one of the few Ottoman army officers to defect to the Sharifian fighting forces during the Arab Revolt.
 - 4 Schleifer quotes an unsourced “chant” (*nashīd*) that al-Qassam reportedly composed at the time: “Ya Rahim, Ya Rahman . . . Unsur Maulana as-Sultan . . . Waʿksur aʿadaʿna al-Italiyan. . . [sic]” (“Oh Most Merciful, Oh Most Compassionate . . . Make our Lord the Sultan victorious . . . And defeat our enemy the Italian. . .”). See S. Abdullah Schleifer, “The Life and Thought of ʿIzz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” *Islamic Quarterly* 5, no. 23 (1979): 64. On the Senussi appeal to the shaykhs of al-Azhar, see Ahmad and al-Tuwayr, *Tarikh al-Jihad fi Libiya didda al-Ghazw al-Itali*, 64–66.
 - 5 “Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey,” August 27, 1906, FO 407/167/326 (BNA). This sentiment was in summation of a series of news articles that appeared in the Paris paper *Le Temps*, under the title “Le Panislamisme en Égypte.” In the August 22, 1906, edition of *Le Temps*, the writer succinctly describes the reception al-Azhar graduates received upon their return: “On les écoute, et on les croit.”
 - 6 Details of al-Qassam’s activities in Jabla as it pertains to raising funds and organizing fighters can be found in Samih Hammuda, *Al-Waʿi wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh ʿIzz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jamʿia al-Dirasat al-Arabiyya, 1985), 25. The 250-men number is reported in both Hammuda (25) and Schleifer (65).
 - 7 Oral information from Ahmad al-Qassam, Yaʿbad, January 17, 2015. His family believes that a small memorial to al-Qassam exists in Libya, placed sometime after his death (likely decades later) commemorating his participation in the Libyan fight against the Italians. For a brief description of Enver Pasha’s use of disguise while participating in the war, see Eugene Rogan, *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), 49.
 - 8 This narrative, along with that of the eventual betrayal of Arab efforts by their British partners, is found most notably in the classic text on the subject in English: George

Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: H. Hamilton, 1938).

- 9 For more on *seferberlik* in Bilad al-Sham during the First World War, see Najwa al-Qattan, “*Safarbarlik: Ottoman Syria in the Great War*,” in *From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Christoph Schumann (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2004). On the decisions by Arab-Ottoman officers to remain in the imperial force, see Michael Provence, *The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), and his “Ottoman Modernity, Colonialism, and Insurgency in the Interwar Arab East,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 2 (2011). The most notable cases of defections to the British after capture were those of Nuri al-Sa‘id and Ja‘far Pasha al-‘Askari. Alternatively, Fawzi al-Qawuqji, the legendary Arab nationalist commander, stayed loyal to the Ottoman Army throughout the war. See Khayriyya Qasimiyya, ed., *Mudhakkirat Fawzi al-Qawuqji* (Damascus: Dar al-Namir, 1995), 51–71; Laila Parsons, *The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914–1948* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2016), 16–27. See also Mesut Uyar, “Ottoman Arab Officers between Nationalism and Loyalty during the First World War,” *War in History* 20, no. 4 (2013): 526–544.
- 10 Schleifer, “Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” 65; Michael Provence, “Late Ottoman State Education,” in *Religion, Ethnicity and Contested Nationhood in the Former Ottoman Space*, ed. Jørgen Nielsen (Boston: Brill, 2012), 119. For more on the Damascus military school, see Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 162n22.
- 11 See L. Schatkowski Schilcher, “The Famine of 1915–1918 in Greater Syria,” in *Problems of the Modern Middle East in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honour of Albert Hourani*, ed. John P. Spagnolo (Reading, UK: Ithica Press, 1992).
- 12 Abdallah Hanna, “The First World War According to the Memories of ‘Commoners’ in the Bilad al-Sham,” in *The World in World Wars: Experiences, Perceptions and Perspectives from Africa and Asia*, ed. Heike Liebau et al. (Boston, MA: Brill, 2010).
- 13 On Kemalist and Sharifian assistance to northern rebels, see Provence, *Last Ottoman Generation*, 110; Philip K. Hitti, *History of Syria* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1951), 32. On November 17, 1920, *Le Temps* published an article that outlined the French position on autonomy in the different parts of the territory. After describing the areas of “Grand Liban,” Damascus and Aleppo, came the area of Latakia: “Créé le 2 Septembre 1920, il comprend des populations montagnardes et relativement primitives. . . . La longue expérience qu’elle [France] a acquise en pareille matière lui commande sans doute de faire des distinctions à cet égard entre les divers éléments de la population, et de ne pas accorder d’ensemble aux Ansarihs ou Alaouites les libertés que méritent déjà le Libanais. Mais le but poursuivi est partout le même. Le moment venu, les gens de Damas, d’Alep ou même Lataquié connaîtront les mêmes prérogatives politiques et administratives que ceux du Liban.” (“Created on September 2, 1920, it includes relatively primitive mountain populations. . . . The long experience that it [France] has acquired in such matters unquestionably requires it to make distinctions in this respect, between the various elements of the population, and to not grant vari-

- ous freedoms to the Ansariehs or Alawites that the Lebanese have already earned. But the goal is everywhere the same. When the time comes, the people of Damascus, Aleppo, or even *Latakia* will experience the same political and administrative prerogatives as those in Lebanon” [emphasis mine].) “L’organisation de la Syrie,” *Le Temps*, November 17, 1920. The presence of Qadiri adepts is reported in Muhammad Kamil al-Qassab and Muhammad ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan fi Daf‘a Awham Khuziran*, ed. Muhammad Zuhayr al-Shawish (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2001), 19.
- 14 Hananu was the leader of much of the anti-colonial resistance in and around the Syrian city of Aleppo, under the banner of the “Council of National Defense.” See “Renseignement fournis par un ancien fonctionnaire de la police d’Alep,” June 6, 1920, *Renseignements* 1920, 2199 (CADN). For more on Hananu, see Keith Watenpugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); James Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). For more on al-Qassam’s connection to other Syrian rebels, see Shai Lachman, “Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929–1939: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement,” in *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, ed. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia Kedourie (London: F. Cass, 1982), 60n33. “That had come down . . .” quotation from Schleifer recounting Hanafi’s testimony, “Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” 80n28. ‘Asim Jundi identifies Zankufa as the base village for al-Qassam’s band. ‘Asim Jundi, *‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Beirut: al-Mu‘asasa al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 1975), 24–25. See also Schleifer, “Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” 65.
 - 15 Nadine Méouchy, “Rural Resistance and the Introduction of Modern Forms of Consciousness in the Syrian Countryside, 1918–1926,” in *From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Christoph Schumann (Beirut: Orient-Institut, 2004), 277.
 - 16 On the diversity of bands, see Fred H. Lawson, “The Northern Syrian Revolts of 1919–1921 and the Sharifian Regime: Congruence or Conflict of Interests and Ideologies?,” in *From the Syrian Land to the States of Syria and Lebanon*, 266; Méouchy, “Rural Resistance and the Introduction of Modern Forms of Consciousness,” 277. On Fayṣal’s relationship with *iṣābāt*, see Philip Khoury, *Syria and the French Mandate: The Politics of Arab Nationalism, 1920–1945* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 104–109; Lawson, “Northern Syrian Revolts of 1919–1921 and the Sharifian Regime,” 266–267.
 - 17 One exception to the lack of first-person accounts from this period is the interview conducted by Schleifer with al-Hajj Hassan al-Hafian. See Schleifer, “Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” 80n8.
 - 18 Abdallah Hanna, “First World War According to the Memories of ‘Commoners,”” 305. *Fitna* in modern usage describes general discord among people. Al-Qassam was also likely making reference to the use of the word in Islamic history, which described a series of conflicts among Muslims in the seventh and eighth centuries, and possibly even the use of *fitna* in the Qur’an to describe seditious unbelief (*shirk*). On the issue

of class tension in al-Qassam's group, see Schleifer, "Life and Thought of 'Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam," 66.

19 See Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*.

20 Schleifer identifies 'Izz al-Din al-Tanukhi, a companion of al-Qassam's from a notable Damascene nationalist family, as al-Qassam's contact with Faysal. See Schleifer, "Life and Thought of 'Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam," 67; "Nous nous adressons . . ." quotation from "Aux fils de la chère patrie," July 21, 1920, 2373 (CADN); "O Enfants de la Patrie . . ." quotation from "À la défense! À la défense! Proclamation Officielle," July 21, 1920, 2373 (CADN). For more information on French advancement into Syria in the months of June and July, see "Evenements Principaux—Renseignements (1er Juin au 23 Juillet 1920)," 2373 (CADN).

21 Palestine was a typical refuge for Syrians facing French death warrants. Al-Qassam's associate Kamil al-Qassab and noted fighter in the 1936–1939 revolt Sa'id al-ʿAs had both been sentenced to death in absentia. The British made little effort—likely for fear of political backlash—to arrest and extradite these men back to Syria, as they had done with more common criminals.

22 During the First World War, certain advancements that had been made toward increasing the use of Arabic (instead of Turkish) in Bilad al-Sham were reversed by Cemal Paşa. Hasan Kayalı describes how Cemal reinstated Turkish to its official use in commercial and public life and once again made Turkish the language of instruction in the state high school in Damascus. While this tension between Turkish and Arabic predates the war by many decades (if not being a permanent feature of life in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire), the war years heightened these tensions. See Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 194–195. On al-Iḥṣāʾ, see Yasir Suleiman, "Nationalism and the Arabic Language: A Historical Overview," in *Arabic Sociolinguistics: Issues and Perspectives*, ed. Yasir Suleiman (Richmond, UK: Curzon Press, 1994), 9. Similar Arabic language associations were active throughout the Arab world, including Haifa, where Halaqa al-Adab (the Literary [study] Circle) promoted the "proper" use of Arabic. On this point, see Muhammad Muhammad Hasan Shurrah, *Hayfa: Jarat al-Karmil wa-ʿArus Filastin* (Amman: al-Ahliyya, 2006), 88. The concept of a renewal of Arabic is also present in Salafi discourse and was one of Muhammad ʿAbduh's concerns. On al-Tanukhi's help to al-Qassam, see also Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam," 190; ʿAli Husayn Khalaf, "Tajribat 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam al-Suriya, 1882–1921," *Shu'un Filastiniyya* 124 (1982): 32. On the border question circa the spring of 1920, see "Palestine: Boundary Question; Anglo-French (Palestine-Syria) Boundary" L/PS/11/192: P 279/1921 (IOR). The story of Tel Hai is covered extensively in Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995); see especially page 39 for reference to French presence in the Upper Galilee.

23 Malek Abisaab, "Shiite Peasants and a New Nation in Colonial Lebanon: The Intifada of Bint Jubayl, 1936," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no. 3 (2009): 490.

- 24 Jabal 'Amil had been a part of different Ottoman vilayets, the last of which was Beirut. For administrative information, see, for instance, *Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut: 1324 Hicri Senesi* (1906) Def'a 6, 134–139. For more on the process of border demarcation, see Asher Kaufman, "Between Palestine and Lebanon: Seven Shi'i Villages as a Case Study of Boundaries, Identities, and Conflict," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 4 (Autumn 2006): 689.
- 25 Norman Bentwich, *England in Palestine* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932), 51. For descriptions of Bedouin activities along the border, see, for instance, Douglas V. Duff, *Sword for Hire: The Sage of a Modern Free-Companion* (London: J. Murray, 1934), 113; Right Honourable Viscount (Herbert Louis) Samuel, *Memoirs* (London: Cresset Press, 1945), 161. For another description of the politics and reality of these borders, especially later in the 1920s and 1930s, see Cyrus Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 258–263.

Chapter 4: Exile to Haifa

- 1 For a discussion of these economic conditions in Palestine in the late Ottoman period, see Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For a description of the ways in which new, "horizontal" power relationships emerged, see James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). On the impact of the mandate regime, see Issa Khalaf, "The Effect of Socioeconomic Change on Arab Societal Collapse in Mandate Palestine," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 1 (1997): 94. On Haifa's industrialization, see chapter 3 of May Seikaly, *Haifa: Transforming Arab Society* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002); Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013).
- 2 Population statistics from J. B. Barron (Superintendent of Census), *Palestine: Report and General Abstracts of the Census of 1922* (Jerusalem: The Greek Convent Press, 1923), 33; E. Mills (Superintendent of Census), *Census of Palestine 1931: Population of Villages, Towns and Administrative Areas* (Jerusalem: The Greek Convent and Goldberg Presses, 1932), 91. Population censuses were conducted only in these two years of the mandate; see also Seikaly, *Haifa*, 49. Statistics of rural population from Ken Stein, "Palestine's Rural Economy: 1917–1939," *Studies in Zionism: Politics, Society, Culture* 8, no. 1 (1987); Mahmud Yazbak, *Al-Hijra al-'Arabiyya ila Hayfa fi Zaman al-Intidab: Dirasa Tarikhiyya Iqtisadiyya, Sukaniyya wa Ijtima'iyya* (Nazareth: Maktabah al-Qabas, 1988), 21–83. The collapse of commodity prices is discussed in Khalaf, "The Effect of Socioeconomic Change on Arab Societal Collapse," 97; Stein, "Palestine's Rural Economy," 25.
- 3 Jerusalem had a population of 62,578 and Jaffa 47,799. See "Table III" in Barron, *Palestine*, 6. For the history of Haifa in the Ottoman period, see Mahmoud Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period, 1864–1914: A Muslim Town in Transition* (Boston: Brill, 1998);

Alex Carmel, *Ottoman Haifa: A History of Four Centuries under Turkish Rule* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011).

- 4 For details of Haifa's geography and climate, see Arnon Soffer and Baruch Kipnis, eds., *Aṭlas Ḥefah ye ha-Karmel* (*Atlas of Haifa and Mount Carmel*) (Haifa: ha-Ḥevrah le-Meḥkar Mada'y Shimushi, Universitat Hefah, 1980), 52. The 1932 (and subsequent) British report to the League of Nations provides insight into British thinking on the climate of the Mediterranean areas of Palestine, describing it as "healthy" and "relaxing in its effects." See League of Nations, *Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom ... to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1932*, December 31, 1932. According to the 1922 census, Haifa had a population of 56,457, of which 34,528 were Muslims (61.5 percent); 11,107 Christians (19.5 percent); 8,745 Jews (15.5 percent); and 1,925 Druze (3.5 percent). See Barron, *Palestine*, 33. Note that the Marj Ibn 'Amr is also known as the Jezreel Valley, while Lake Tiberias is more typically called the Sea of Galilee and is now called Lake Kinneret by the state of Israel.
- 5 Al-Hanifi's presence is noted in Basheer M. Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 190. Subhi Yasin claims only Hanifi and 'Ubayd, al-Qassam's "comrades in arms," made the clandestine trip, as does one of his students at al-Burj school, 'Abd al-Rahman Murad. Alternately, Zuhayr al-Mardini says as many as six others accompanied al-Qassam. See Subhi Yasin, *Harb al-'Isabat fi Filastin* (Cairo: Dar al-Katib al-'Arabi li-l-Tiba'a wa-l-Nashr, 1967), 61; 'Abd al-Rahman Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah* (Damascus: Dar al-Jil li-l-Taba'a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi', 1991), 47; Zuhayr al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma' al-Hajj Amin* (Beirut: Dar al-'Irfan, 1977), 981. Al-Qassam's refusal to negotiate with the French authorities is noted in al-Mardini, 981. For a description of al-Qassam's early days in Haifa with his companions, see Muhammad Kamil al-Qassab and Muhammad 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan fi Daf'a Awham Khuziran*, ed. Muhammad Zuhayr al-Shawish (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2001), 18. For reference to the help they received from Haifawis, see Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa'i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jam'ia al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya, 1985), 43.
- 6 For a list of some of those condemned by the French, see, for instance, "Armée française du Levant, Conseil de guerre: Compte-rendu de Jugements rendus dans la séance du 9 Août 1920," Vincennes, 141004/38 (SHD). This list includes many prominent Arab nationalists, founders of al-Fatat, and future associates of al-Qassam's. Faysal himself would eventually flee to Haifa, before being invited to temporary exile in Europe in August 1920. See Right Honourable Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* (London: Cresset, 1945), 158; Norman Bentwich, *England in Palestine* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932), 51.
- 7 On al-Qassam's companions' intercession with the French, see al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma' al-Hajj Amin*, 981. For the timeline of his move to Balad al-Shaykh, see Bajhat Abu Gharbiyya, *Fi Khidamm al-Nidal al-'Arabi al-Filastini: Mudhakkirat al-Munadil* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1993), 45; Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam,"

190. For details of the village and its history, see Muhammad Muhammad Hasan Shurrah, *Mu'jam Asma' al-Mudun wa-l-Qura al-Filastiniyya* (Amman: al-Mamlaka al-Urduniyya al-Hashimiyya, 2000), 87; Nabil Mahmud al-Sahli, *Qaryat Balad al-Shaykh* (Damascus: Dar al-Shajara li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi', 2001), 11–13; Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhira*, 40. For a map of the village in the final decade of the British Mandate, see Survey of Palestine, Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, *Town Plans: Palestine, Haifa*, map, sheet 4, 1st ed., 1:10,000 (London: His Britannic Majesty's Stationary Office, 1948).
- 8 On the shrine and khan, see al-Sahli, *Qaryat Balad al-Shaykh*. 'Abd al-Rahman Murad writes that the shrine was used for a period as a *zāwiya*. Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhira*, 35. For the note on the school in Balad al-Shaykh, see Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 152. For the evacuation of the residents of Ard al-Raml, see "Insanitary Hutments on Outskirts of Haifa," HC Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore, June 1937, CO 733/351/1 (BNA), 3.
- 9 For road condition, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 68. The road was paved in 1937. Car ads were common in both the Hebrew and Arabic press. The most accessible images available for Haifa are from the American Colony and Matson Photo Collections at the United States Library of Congress (LOC) and the National Library of Israel's (NLI) Ze'ev Aleksandrowicz Collection. Both have hundreds of black-and-white photographs taken during the mandate (and after), including dozens from the year 1933 during the port's construction. At the Central Zionist Archives (CZA), the Zvi Feigin Collection covers the same period in Haifa. Less accessible are the images available through the Haifa Municipal Archives (HMA), though these, too, can provide a visual memory of the city and its environs during the mandate. The period between 1923 and 1926 witnessed a greater than doubling of the small-scale factories and industrial workshops in cities such as Haifa, where facilities involved in the petrochemical industry stood next to flour mills, cement plants, and salt and cooking-oil refineries. See Ronen Shamir, *Current Flow: The Electrification of Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 133, 180n15. The description of this trip is compiled from images found in the photographic sources mentioned above, cross-checked with the following two detailed maps: Survey of Palestine, Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, *Town Plans: Palestine, Haifa*, map, sheets 1 and 4, 1st ed., 1:10,000 (London: His Britannic Majesty's Stationary Office, 1948). The Shell Bridge was completed in 1931, and its dedication was attended by the High Commissioner Sir John Chancellor and his wife, Elsie. Photos of the event can be found in the American Colony (Jerusalem) collection at the Library of Congress. See also League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, Twentieth Session, June 9–27, 1931, 6.
- 10 On the Islamic Society's formation, see Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam," 190. Description of the *awqāf* as small can be found in Seikaly, *Haifa*, 30–31, and for religious families see 160–161. For the note on Murad and the SMC, see Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam under the British Mandate for Palestine* (New York: Brill, 1987), 25, 65.
- 11 The British Mandate for Palestine was assigned by the Allies at the San Remo Confer-

- ence in April 1920, though it came into effect officially in September 1923. For notable family support of the British administration, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 160. For a note on Shaykh al-Khatib, see Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period*, 131; Seikaly, *Haifa*, 184. On Hasan Shukri see Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement* (London: Cass, 1974), 217. Violence that erupted in April 1920 around the Nabī Mūsā festival resulted in nine deaths and hundreds of injuries. This took place under the British military administration led by Lieutenant General Louis Bols. See Eddie (Awad) Halabi, “The Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival in Jerusalem, 1917–1937: From Local and Islamic to Modern and Nationalist Celebration” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2007). For the British report on the violence, see Great Britain, Palestine, *Disturbances in May 1921: Reports of the Commission of Inquiry*, Cmd. 1540 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1921) (“Haycraft Commission”).
- 12 In a letter to the high commissioner, B. Goldberg of the Palestine Silicate Company describes the assault he faced during the riots. He expresses indignation that the British administration had failed to protect someone who had come to “upbuild” the country. The Zionist colonial discourse of improvement was thus firmly ingrained from the outset of the mandate, and tensions mounted as Jewish immigration into the port cities of Jaffa and later Haifa brought the two communities into sharp relief. See Goldberg to the High Commissioner, May 3, 1921, 10/13 (ISA). “Bayan ila al-‘Alam al-Mutamadan” is reproduced in Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 44.
 - 13 For letter bearing al-Qassam’s name, see “Petition of Haifa Notables to the High Commissioner in Support of the Appointment of al-Hajj Amin al-Husayni to Mufti of Jerusalem,” reproduced in Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 133. The relation between al-Qassam and Nur Allah is asserted in Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 43. For Mustafa Nur Allah Effendi see *Salname-i Vilayet-i Beyrut: 1311–1312 Hicri Senesi (1894) Def‘a 1* (Beirut: Beyrut Vilayet Matbaasi, 1894), 169. See also Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period*, 152. For an explanation of usufruct of state (*miri*) land in late Ottoman Palestine, see Martin P. Bunton, *Colonial Land Policies in Palestine, 1917–1936* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36–37.
 - 14 The 1917 letter from the Islamic Society is described in Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 45. Rutenberg’s Jaffa Electric Company was awarded the “Auja Concession” to electrify Jaffa (and Tel Aviv) in 1921 and later the “Jordan Concession” to electrify the rest of Palestine on March 5, 1926. See Ronen Shamir, *Current Flow*, 15.
 - 15 For more on the rule of Zahir al-‘Umar, see Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period*, 13–16. For points about the mosques, see for instance Muhammad Muhammad Hasan Shurrah, *Hayfa: Jarat al-Karmil wa-‘Arus Filastin* (Amman: al-Ahliyya, 2006), 81; Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 44. In the letter sent by the Islamic Society on behalf of Amin al-Husayni’s nomination to the post of mufti of Jerusalem, al-Qassam lists his profession as teacher (*mudaris*). Reproduced in Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 133 (appendix 1).
 - 16 This area, in particular the intersection on which al-Burj was located, became the scene of fighting at the end of the mandate; “Burj Hill, Haifa Closed for Road Re-

- pairs,” *Palestine Post*, May 16, 1938, p. 5. The Hever no. 54 bus also ran from Carmel Station along Herzl Street, the boundary between Wadi Salib and Hadar HaCarmel. The Hever Company, which emerged from the cooperative Kibbutz movement, was the sole municipal transportation company serving the Jewish neighborhoods of Haifa, highlighting the connection between Jewish settlements in and around Haifa with the socialist elements of the Yishuv. The company’s annual New Year’s greeting in the Yishuv’s English daily newspaper wished upon the Jewish residents of Haifa a year of “consolidation and multiplication.” This, like many such enterprises, connected seemingly benign services to the consolidation of the Zionist project, and would be targeted by Palestinians during the 1936–1939 Revolt. See “‘Hever’ Motor ‘Bus [sic] Service Cooperative Society Haifa Ltd. Extends New Year Greeting,” *Palestine Post*, September 16, 1936, p. 27.
- 17 On the timeline of al-Qassam’s employment in the two schools, see Hammuda, *Al-Wa’i wa-l-Thawra*, 43. On striking a student and banning smoking, see al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma’ al-Hajj Amin*, 981. We know al-Qassam was a smoker from family accounts.
 - 18 The story of “What do you want to do with your future?” is recounted in Hammuda, *Al-Wa’i wa-l-Thawra*, 43. The pistol story was recounted to me by Ahmad al-Qassam in Ya’bad, January 17, 2015.
 - 19 The Battle of Hattin celebrations are described in Hammuda, *Al-Wa’i wa-l-Thawra*, 43.
 - 20 For biographical information on al-Qassab, see al-Qassab and al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan* (2001), 18; Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam,” 191–192. The Kamiliyya school was originally called *madrassa al-‘Uthmaniyya*. See also Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, *Al-‘Alam: Qamus Tarajim li-Ashhar al-Rijal wa-l-Nisa’ min al-‘Arab wa-l-Musta’ribin wa-l-Mustashriqin* (Cairo: n.p. 1954); Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 93n12. ‘Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar was a prominent Arab nationalist in Syria who was active in resisting the French occupation and mandate. He served as Faysal’s foreign minister during the amir’s short reign. Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli was a prominent Syrian nationalist, intellectual, and writer. See ‘Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar, *Mudhakkirat ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Shahbandar* (Beirut: Dar al-Irshad, 1967); Khayr al-Din al-Zirikli, *Ma Ra’aytu wa-ma Sami’tu min Dimashq ila Makka* (1929) (Abu Dhabi: Dar al-Suwaydi li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi’, 2009). For an account of Shabandar’s activities in Syria during the Great Syrian Revolt, see Laila Parsons, *The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914–1948* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2016), 46–48. On Rushdi al-Safadi, see “Ruchdi Bey Safadi,” May 26, 1920, *Affaires Étrangères, Services Spéciaux Renseignements*, 2199/1065 (CADN).
 - 21 On al-Qassab’s death sentence, see “Armée française du Levant, Conseil de guerre: Compte-rendu de Jugements rendus dans la séance du 9 Août 1920,” Vincennes, 141004/38 (SHD).
 - 22 Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam,” 190.
 - 23 On the dispute over curriculum, see Hammuda, *Al-Wa’i wa-l-Thawra*, 43. On the politics of curriculum, see Abdul Latif Tibawi, *Arab Education in Mandatory Palestine: A Study of Three Decades of British Administration* (London: Luzac, 1956), 88–91.
 - 24 On al-Qassab’s use of physical force, see Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*, 92–93.
 - 25 Muhammad Kamil al-Qassab and Muhammad ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-*

- Bayan fi Dafʿa Awham Khuziran* (Damascus: Matbaʿat al-Tariqri, 1925). Two editions of the book are common. The first edition, published in 1925, was later updated, edited, and supplemented in 2001 by Muhammad Zuhayr al-Shawish, a prominent Syrian Salafi ʿālim and leader in the Muslim Brotherhood in Damascus. For more on al-Shawish, see Umar F. ʿAbd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1983), 107.
- 26 Al-Qassab and al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan* (1925), 67.
- 27 Letter found in *al-Yarmuk*, May 14, 1925, and also reproduced in Hammuda, *Al-Waʿi wa-l-Thawra*, 136–137. The debate over *tahlil* and *takbir* is particularly interesting when placed within the context of the cyclical, episodic bouts of nationalist violence. On tensions with other ʿulamaʾ in the aftermath of ʿAbd al-Baha’s death, see editor note in al-Qassab and al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan* (2001). In 1922 there were only about 150 Bahai in Haifa, yet they were an active community and received pilgrims as well. See Barron, *Palestine*, 33. One irony about this particular case is that it was the funeral that brought al-Qassam’s reprobation upon the Bahai—a funeral described as the largest in all of Palestine, the same description used for al-Qassam’s fourteen years later. See also Norman Bentwich, *My 77 Years: An Account of my Life and Times, 1883–1960* (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), 57–58. While it’s not clear exactly what customs al-Qassam is accused of altering, this claim appears in a few of the sources; see al-Shawish writing in al-Qassab and al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan* (2001), 18; Yasin, *Harb al-ʿIsabat fi Filastin*, 63–64. “Scholarly polemics” and “conspiratorial theories” quotations from Nafi, “Shaykh ʿIzz al-Din al-Qassam,” 193.
- 28 Letter in *al-Karmil*, June 6, 1925. Al-Qassam is also critical of the *al-Yarmuk* editorial for having been written by a non-ʿālim, whom he instructed to “limit your writing to that for which God has singled you out.” ʿAbdallah al-Jazzar was born in Acre in 1855 and trained at al-Azhar. He was a *khaṭīb* and imam at the al-Jazzar Mosque (he did not have a familial relation to the mosque’s namesake, Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar, the brutal Ottoman ruler of Acre). ʿAbdallah al-Jazzar was also a member of the city’s Shadhiliyya Sufi *ṭariqa*. For more on al-Jazzar, see ʿAdil Mannaʿ, *ʿAlam Filastin fi Awakhir al-ʿAhd al-ʿUthmani (1800–1918)* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1995), 83.
- 29 Association between al-Zinkaluni and ʿAbduh is noted in Nafi, “Shaykh ʿIzz al-Din al-Qassam,” 193. Al-Khuzayran’s background is noted in Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council*, 61. “*Fasl al-Khitab*” is reproduced in al-Qassab and al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan* (2001), 6.
- 30 According to Palestine Police documents, al-Khuzayran would become a significant fundraiser and propagandist for the “rebel movement” around Haifa after al-Qassam’s death. See “Societies and People,” ca. 1938, Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3B (MEC). “O People, calm yourselves . . .” quotation from al-Qassab and al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan* (1925), 67–68.
- 31 On the problem of the size of the mosques, see Kamal al-Khalidi, *Hayfa al-Bidaya wa Filastin al-Mustaqarr: Shahada* (Beirut: Dar al-Ruwad, [n.d.]), 28. Construction date from Murad, *Safhat ʿan Hayfa wa Maʿrakatuha al-Akhirah*, 35.
- 32 On the new mosque’s origins, name, and design in the next two paragraphs, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 191–192; al-Khalidi, *Hayfa al-Bidaya wa Filastin al-Mustaqarr*, 28–29.

- 33 For detailed photographs and maps of the port area, see Palestine Government, *Opening of Haifa Harbour, 31 October 1933* (Jerusalem: Goldberg Press, 1933). The mosque's proximity to the industrial center of the city would later lead to its partial destruction when Italian bombers dropped their payloads near the mosque in 1940, killing thirty-nine Palestinians. Pictures taken by ANZAC forces in Haifa show billows of deep black smoke rising past the elevated portico and minaret. See also Sylva M. Gelber, *No Balm in Gilead: A Personal Retrospective of Mandate Days in Palestine* (Ottawa, ON: Carleton University Press, 1989), 146.
- 34 Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 35. Muhammad Murad is an important figure in Haifa during the early years of the mandate. From the beginning, he was opposed to Zionist immigration into Palestine, sending a telegraph on behalf of the Islamic Society to Sharif Husayn in 1919 that the Muslims of Haifa were opposed to the promises made by the British in the Balfour Declaration. See Shurrab, *Hayfa*, 93.
- 35 Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa' 'an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin: Mudhakkirat Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, 1891–1953*, ed. Walid al-Khalidi (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2005), 152.
- 36 Content of al-Qassam's sermons is described in Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 48.
- 37 The mosque's importance to nationalist politics is discussed in al-Khalidi, *Hayfa al-Bidaya wa Filastin al-Mustaqarr*, 29.

Chapter 5: Workers and Villagers

- 1 Total Jewish population details from Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 135. Immigration details from High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 1935, CO 733/278/13 (BNA). The high commissioner, Arthur Wauchope, finished his letter with "Jew and Arab much as they trouble one another—and often their rulers—possess fine qualities, though some of these run in excess. Acquisitiveness in the one, idiosyncrasy for nationalism in the other." This sentiment, displayed by British colonial officials toward their colonial subjects, is described by Rashid Khalidi in the following way: "The preferred posture of the greatest power of the age was to pose as the impartial external actor, doing its level-headed, rational, civilized best to restrain the savage passions of the wild and brutish locals." Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 51.
- 2 Landownership statistics from High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 1935, CO 733/278/13. Note: A dunam (in the Levant) is comparable to roughly ten thousand square feet or a decare. Gross figures here are somewhat misleading. While the 1.3 million dunams figure for Jewish landownership in 1935 was a small percentage of total land in Palestine, the quality and concentration of that land made it more valuable. On the symbolic power of land sales, see chapter 5 of Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). For landlessness and public policy, see Martin P. Bunton, *Colonial Land Policies in Palestine, 1917–1936* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2007), 80. On these issues in 1935, see High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 7, 1935, CO 733/294, (BNA). Additionally, it should be noted that al-Qassam's main area of operation—around Haifa and the Galilee—was home to thirty of the fifty-odd pre-First World War Zionist agricultural settlements. See Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, 246n63.

- 3 For a history of the Supreme Muslim Council, see Uri M. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council: Islam under the British Mandate for Palestine* (New York: Brill, 1987). For a history of the al-Husayni family, see Ilan Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: The Husaynis, 1700–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). For sources that detail factional rivalries between the Husaynis and the Nashashibis, see Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement* (London: Cass, 1974); Issa Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939–1948* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991). Although downplaying the substantial racist foundations upon which British concepts of colonial governance rested, and reasserting the monolithic view of the “Arab World” similarly held by many of the characters who populate his book, David Cannadine has nevertheless presented a useful view of how some British officials looked at local populations through the lens of class. Though the book only looks at the Middle East in passing and focuses largely on Hashemite kings, the British predilection for social hierarchy and nobility has echoes in the way the Palestine mandate was governed. See David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 71–80.
- 4 The foundational text of this line of thinking is Rashid Khalidi's *Palestinian Identity*, which covers the evolution of Palestinian national consciousness. Chapter 7 of that work in particular deals with the crucial early years of the mandate, 1917–1923. See also Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, 65–66. Antagonism between the two families and their partisans worsened over time thanks in some measure to British manipulation. By the outbreak of the revolt in 1936, the factionalism had turned violent. See Khalaf, *Politics in Palestine*, chapter 6.
- 5 Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, 81. I've chosen to use the term “nationalist” in a broad fashion to include those who were advocating for, or making some efforts toward, securing self-determination for Palestinians, whether in a decolonized territory that would be an independent Palestine or in a union with Greater Syria. This is, of course, a complicated issue, for Palestine in this period more than many other places, and in using the term “nationalist” to describe this group, I am eliding a number of divisions for simplicity's sake. Additionally, I've used the term “popular nationalist” to refer to nationalists who were a part of the “mass” movements or organizations with a principal base of support not connected to the traditional leadership. This too is an incomplete conceptual framework, as, for instance, some members of the Istiqlal Party were connected to notable families.

With these terms, I'm drawing on some of the general distinctions made by James Gelvin in regard to Syria in *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria*

at the Close of the Empire (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). The narrow study looks at the brief period between the end of the First World War and the beginning of the French Mandate in Syria. These two years saw the short-lived Sharifian government under Faysal and the cohort he had led during the Arab Revolt. In the context of this period, in which the Ottoman Empire had been replaced by another outsider (albeit an Arab one), the shape of the nation was a contested subject. Gelvin, while not abandoning the *ʿayān* altogether as drivers of nationalist discourse, does undermine their perceived monopoly on its production and dissemination. This is a “nationalist dialectic” between the *ʿayān*, who by and large supported Faysal’s government on one hand, and “horizontally” connected groups including the ‘ulama’, merchants, artisans, and even criminals who rejected the Sharifian claim to Syria on the other. This tension between the two competing visions for Syria is mapped by Gelvin through a study of how the concept of the nation was interpreted by the “street” in terms of slogans, symbols, and demonstrations.

- 6 There has been fair bit of attention paid to the history of labor in the British Mandate. In English, see Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000). See also George Mansur’s text given in response to the Royal (Peel) Commission, an excerpt of which was published in 2012: George Mansur, “The Arab Worker under the Palestine Mandate (1937)” *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012). There have been many studies in Arabic of this topic as well. See: Fa’iq Hamdi Tahbub, *Al-haraka al-ʿUmmaliyya wa-l-Niqabiyya fi Filastin, 1920–1948* (Kuwait: Sharika Kazima, 1982); Ahmad Husayn al-Yamani, *Jamʿiyat al-ʿUmmal al-ʿArabiyya al-Filastiniyya bi-Hayfa* (Damascus: Dar Kanʿan, 1993); Bulus Farah, *Al-Haraka al-ʿUmmaliyya al-ʿArabiyya al-Filastiniyya: Jadaliyat Baʿthiha wa Suqutiha* (Haifa: Maktab wa Maktabat Kul Shayʿ, 1987). The meeting is described in al-Yamani, 32–33. For more on the first union organization in Palestine, see Yitzchak Klein, *Ha-Ḳehilah ha-ʿArvit be-Ḳefah be-Ṭekufat ha-Mandaṭ* (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1983), 29. For a description of the relationships within the Haifa railway workshop between Jews and Palestinians in the mid-1920s, see the memoirs of Bulus Farah, *Min al-ʿUthmaniyya ila al-Dawla al-ʿIbriyya* (Nazareth: al-Sawt, 1985). Complaints had been levied that in the railway workshop, employees were required to work twelve to thirteen hours a day and that much of the staff had been categorized as “casual” workers. See League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, fifteenth session (October 24–November 11, 1927), 25. “The nucleus for the establishment . . .” quotation from Klein, 30.
- 7 Al-Qassam’s encouragement and use of hadith is described in al-Yamani, *Jamʿiyat al-ʿUmmal al-ʿArabiyya al-Filastiniyya bi-Hayfa*, 32–33. Comment on registration of the association is noted in Muhammad Muhammad Hasan Shurrab, *Hayfa: Jarat al-Karmil wa-ʿArus Filastin* (Amman: al-Ahliyya, 2006), 79; al-Yamani, 33–34. Shurrab says the paperwork was filed on May 9, 1925, and approved August 8. Al-Maʿdi information from May Seikaly, *Haifa: Transformation of a Palestinian Arab Society, 1918–1939* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1995), 187. The district commissioner may have been either

- Lt-Col. (George) Stewart Symes, who became the acting chief secretary of the government of Palestine (the senior executive position after the high commissioner), replacing Gilbert Clayton on June 3, 1925, or Symes's replacement, Albert Abramson. See Right Honourable Viscount (Herbert Louis) Samuel, *Memoirs* (London: Cresset, 1945), 156. A copy of the 1932 version of this form is reproduced in 'Izzat Darwaza's memoirs, Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza, 1305—1404 H/1887—1984 M: Sijil Hafil bi-Masirat al-haraka al-'Arabiyya wa-l-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya Khilala Qarn min al-Zaman*, vol. 1 (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1993), 797.
- 8 Haymur meeting is described in Shurrah, *Hayfa*, 79. The relationship between Haymur and al-Qassam is described in al-Yamani, *Jam'iyat al-'Ummal al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya bi-Hayfa*, 174.
 - 9 PAWS platform and tensions with the Histadrut are described in al-Yamani, *Jam'iyat al-'Ummal al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya bi-Hayfa*, 33. "Its new name ..." quotation comes from Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 146. See also p. 90.
 - 10 League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, fifteenth session, 26. It is likely that Symes had PAWS in mind when he gave that statement a year after the union received approval, considering his position in Haifa when the initial application was made.
 - 11 Meeting at al-Qassam's house is noted in Husni Salih al-Khuffash, *Mudhakkirat Husni Salih al-Khuffash hawla Tarikh al-Haraka al-'Ummaliyya al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya* (Beirut: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, Markaz al-Abhath, 1973), 13; al-Yamani, *Jam'iyat al-'Ummal al-'Arabiyya al-Filastiniyya bi-Hayfa*, 33–35. Al-Qassam's sermon detailed in al-Yamani, 35.
 - 12 The inevitability of the PAWS formation given the larger conflict is an argument made by Lockman in *Comrades and Enemies*, 146. On the point concerning al-Hajj Ibrahim, see Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries*, 130. For a comprehensive history of the tobacco industry and labor strikes in neighboring Lebanon, see Malek Abisaab, *Militant Women of a Fragile Nation* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2010).
 - 13 Najati Sidqi, *Mudhakkirat Najati Sidqi* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2001), 86. See also Ibrahim Muhammad Abu Hashhash, *Najati Sidqi: Hayatuhu wa-Adabuhu 1905–1979* (Jerusalem: Al-Jam'iyya al-Filastiniyya al-Akadiimiyya li-l-Shu'un al-Dawliyya, 1990), 24.
 - 14 For more on the historiographic tendency to parse "Islamic" resistance from communism, see Malek Abisaab and Rula Abisaab's work on the connections between Shi'ite and Marxist political movements in Lebanon (and 1960s Iraq) from the mandate through to today. The authors show the connections and frictions that make studies that attempt to isolate either strain of politics fundamentally limited. Rula Jurdi Abisaab and Malek Abisaab, *The Shi'ites of Lebanon: Modernism, Communism, and Hizbullah's Islamists* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014).
 - 15 Rashid Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa' an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin: Mudhakkirat Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, 1891–1953*, ed. Walid al-Khalidi (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2005), 153. Khalil 'Issa (Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir) also alludes to al-Qassam's financial situation, saying that al-Qassam had been excused from some of the finan-

- cial obligations that his followers adhered to because he had a “large family and a simple life.” From “Interview with Khalil ‘Issa (Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir) on resistance to the British Mandate and the revolt of ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam in the year 1935,” audio interview #15 [n.d.] (BIR).
- 16 The presence of al-Qassam’s children at wedding ceremonies was recounted to me by Ahmad al-Qassam in Ya’bad, January 17, 2015. On the question of al-Qassam’s clandestine reasons to become a *madhūn*, Zuhayr al-Shawish speculated that al-Qassam was given the position of *madhūn* by the mufti of Jerusalem so that he could conduct his recruitment “in front of the British.” Muhammad Kamil al-Qassab and Muhammad ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan fi Daf‘a Awham Khuziran*, ed. Muhammad Zuhayr al-Shawish (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2001), 19. “Meet his expenses” quotation from Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 153. On salary as *khaṭīb*, see Kupferschmidt, *Supreme Muslim Council*, 76. For more on the wages of laborers working on the development projects in Haifa, such as the port or oil terminal, see Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 136. On supplementary income for the *madhūn*, see Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, vol. 2 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1935), 25. See also Abdul-Latif Kanafani, *Haifa Diary: Reminiscences of an Octogenarian* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2014), 22.
 - 17 The *Madhūn* questionnaire is reproduced in Muhammad Shurrah, *‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam: Shaykh al-Mujahidin fi Filastin* (Damascus: Dar al-Qalam, 2000), 158–160; Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jam‘ia al-Dirasat al-‘Arabiyya, 1985), 140–141. The fact that we have the exam and answer sheet submitted by al-Qassam in evaluating his qualifications for the position also undermines those who claim that his job as *madhūn* was given to him by local notables to help build his organization.
 - 18 On the matter of marriages falling under civil authority, see “Marriages in Palestine,” November 15, 1930, CO 733/192/13 (BNA).
 - 19 Quotation from Hilma Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, vol. 1 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1931), 149. Granqvist was conducting field research on village customs in Palestine during the British Mandate largely in the vicinity of Bethlehem. I’ve decided to use her description of wedding customs in contemporary Artas as a rough approximation of what al-Qassam would have been experiencing on average in his numerous trips to the small villages of northern Palestine. Artas had a population nearly identical to Balad al-Shaykh’s in the 1922 census (407 residents in the latter and 433 in the former) and, despite regional micro-cultures that may account for some differences, it provides a good model for such descriptions. As Shelagh Weir notes, Granqvist’s works “have a unique place in Middle East anthropology, both for the wealth of information she provides and in the absence of comparable studies for the prewar [interwar] period in Palestine.” The description above is not meant to be definitive, and all the caveats on early twentieth-century ethnography apply, but Granqvist’s extensive use of “verbatim” testimony from Palestinian villagers is a valuable source for historians of village life during the mandate. Shelagh G. Weir, “Hilma Granqvist and Her Contribution to Palestine Studies,” *Bulle-*

tin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies 2, no. 1 (1975): 6. For more on the different micro-cultures between Palestinian village wedding ceremonies, see Husayn 'Ali Lubani, *Mu'jam al-A'ras al-Sha'abiyya al-Filastiniyya* (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnan Nashirun, 2009).

- 20 There is some indication that during the 1920s the mandate government encouraged the Supreme Muslim Council to require the *madhūn* to ascertain consent from the bride to be married to the groom, yet there is little indication beyond the anecdotal as to how much it was enforced in the villages of Palestine. In fact, most anecdotal evidence reflects little on matters of consent. See Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, vol. 1, 56.
- 21 The finalizing of the *'aqd al-nikāh* was typically a private affair, done in the presence of as few witnesses as required by law. Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, vol. 2, 23–24. The only other accessible contemporary account of marriage in the mandatory Mashriq comes from a French study of marriage in Syria. This work is less scholarly than Granqvist's, which despite its flaws attempts to present verbatim accounts from Palestinians. Here the author Khaled Chatila describes the Syrian marriage ceremony involving the *madhūn*: "La cérémonie s'ouvre par la lecture du «mouled» qui relate la naissance du Prophète. Cette lecture est faite au milieu du silence déferent des convives. On y ajoute parfois la récitation de quelques versets koraniques. Après ces préliminaires, qui contribuent à donner à cette réunion un caractère religieux assez marqué, l'on procède à la rédaction du contrat de mariage." (The ceremony opens with the reading of the "*mawlid*" which recounts the birth of the Prophet. This reading is made in the midst of the guests' deferent silence. Sometimes the recitation of some Qur'anic verses are added. After these preliminaries, which contribute to giving this meeting a rather marked religious character, they proceed to the drafting of the marriage contract.) Khaled Chatila, *Le Mariage chez les Musulmans en Syrie: Étude de Sociologie* (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste, 1934), 277. On *zaffeh*, see Lubani, *Mu'jam al-A'ras al-Sha'abiyya al-Filastiniyya*, 85. This comes from a description of wedding customs of Balad al-Shaykh but is repeated for many of the villages in the Haifa district including Ijzim (p. 53), Shefa'amr (p. 158), Saffuriyya (p. 166), al-Tantura (p. 178), and al-Tira (p. 185). For details of the feast, see Granqvist, vol. 2, 108.
- 22 Many esoteric religious rituals, typically described by anthropologists as "folk" religion of the variety al-Qassam would have abhorred, were also performed in some villages by a local shaykh or a visiting *madhūn* or *wā'iz*. Granqvist transcribes anecdotes from villagers describing exorcisms, the deactivation of charms, and fertility rites. The anecdotal evidence in these cases simply suggests that there was a plurality of Islamic practices deemed acceptable by locals. Al-Qassam's Salafist tendencies would have inclined him to discourage such practices, but the fact that the *madhūn* was requested to intercede on behalf of the villagers against marriage-related spirits shows that the position carried with it an authority not typically found in the villages. For descriptions of these rituals, see Granqvist, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village*, vol. 2, 154 (fertility rituals), 165 (exorcism), 199 (charms). "Put aside hatred . . ." quotation from Subhi Muhammad Yasin, *Al-Thawra al-'Arabiyya al-Kubra (fi Filastin)*, 1936–1939 (Damsacus: Dar al-Huna, 1961), 20.

- 23 Yasin, *Al-Thawra al-ʿArabiyya al-Kubra (fi Filastin)*, 1936–1939, 21. Yasin is here implying that al-Qassam had developed a “plan” for revolt by 1928. In fact, like many al-Qassam biographers, Yasin does not indicate precisely when he believes such a plan was conceived, instead suggesting that al-Qassam came to Palestine with the intent to overthrow the British.
- 24 “The Sheikh Izzedin Al-Qassam Gang,” [c. 1936] Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3C (MEC).
- 25 “Terrorism 1936–1937,” Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3C (MEC).
- 26 For the Palestinian position, see “Resolutions of the Great Muslim Congress held at Jerusalem on November 1, 1928, for the defense of the Holy Burāq and the Holy Muslim Places,” reproduced as Exhibit no. 45 (i) A, Great Britain, Palestine, Commission on the Disturbances of August 1929, vols. 1–3, Cmd. 3530 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1930) (hereafter “Shaw Commission Report”). See also Porath, *Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement*, 265–266.
- 27 These false rumors included news that Jews were attacking the Mosque of ʿUmar in Jerusalem’s Old City, and that many Palestinian Muslims had been killed by Jews. On this, and reference to sermons at al-Istiqlal and al-Jarina, see “Exhibit No 12 A: Report of Major G. R. E. Foley on the Events in the Northern District from the 23rd to the 29th of August” and “Exhibit No. 12 F: Report of Mr. W. J. Howard Beard on Events in Haifa, From 23rd to 27th August, 1929,” both from Shaw Commission Report.
- 28 More details can be found in “Exhibit No. 12 C: Diary of Mr. J. M. Kyles on the events of the Northern District from the 23rd to the 29th of August, 1929,” Shaw Commission report. “Arabs of both sexes . . .” quotation from “Exhibit No 12 A: Report of Major G. R. E. Foley,” Shaw Commission Report.
- 29 For a description of the Yishuv in Haifa’s sentiments toward the police during this period, see “Telephonic Conversation with Mr. Horowitz, Jerusalem, at about 22.15 h” August 31, 1929, 2/776/2 (ISA). On Foley’s comments to representatives of the Yishuv in Haifa, see the latter’s description of what Foley said in “Interview No. 6, 27 August 1929,” Files of the Knesset Israel, Committee of the Jewish Community in Haifa Papers, 239/1 (HMA). “You people have upset my public security . . .” quotation from “Interview with Deputy Superintendent for Police,” August 25, 1929, 239/1 (HMA).
- 30 The “festering sore” assessment comes from Major Foley as reported in “Exhibit No 12 A: Report of Major G. R. E. Foley,” Shaw Commission Report.
- 31 Leaflet titled “Al-Kaff al-Aswad,” 1/1/311 (CZA). It is also reproduced in Yuval Arnon-Ohanna, *Herev mi-Bayit: ha-Maʿvaḥ ha-Penimi ba-Tenuʿah ha-Palestīnit, 1929–1939* (Tel Aviv: Yariv-Hadar be-Shitufim Mekhon Shiloah, 1981), 300.

Chapter 6: The Tip of the Thread

- 1 “Indeed . . . they had discovered the tip of the thread,” made in reference to the Nahalal bombing investigation, in “The Gang of Sheikh Kassam” IS 8/03 (HA). Timeline of hangings reported in “Disorders Mark Hanging of Arabs,” *New York Times*, June 18, 1930.
- 2 On al-Qassam referencing the hangings years later, see Bayan Nuwayhid Al-Hut, *Al-Qiyadat wa-al-Muʿassasat al-Siyasiyya fi Filastin, 1917–1948* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1981), 317. Public hangings were less common before the

1936–1939 Revolt, when the more brutal counterinsurgency tactics of the British involved the display of corpses. One example of this is the death of al-Qassam's long-time associate Farhan al-Sa'di, who was hanged in 1937. A handbill at the time of the shaykh's hanging features a drawing of a public gallows from which hang three Arab figures—one in a tarbush and jacket representing the *a'yān* class, one in a kaffiyya representing the fellahin, and one in the clothes of an urbanite. The caption reads (roughly) "Nations learn from, and history is witness to, this small example of English fairness with their Arab allies yesterday." Untitled handbill, S25/9332 (CZA). For more on British tactics in suppressing the revolt, see Matthew Kraig Kelly, *Crime in the Mandate: British and Zionist Criminological Discourse and Arab Nationalist Agitation in Palestine, 1936–1939* (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2013). See also Bayan Nuwayhid Al-Hut, ed., *Watha'iq al-Haraka al-Wataniyya al-Filastiniyya, 1918–1939: Min Awraq Akram Zu'aytir* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1979), 691. The British routinely returned the bodies of executed Palestinians to relatives willing to claim the corpses. See Douglas Duff, *Palestine Picture* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936), 180.

- 3 "Sons of Palestine" quotation from *Al-Yarmuk*, June 17, 1930. "Muslim youths will rise up" quotation from *Al-Hayat*, as quoted in "Condemned Arabs May Obtain a Stay," *New York Times*, June 16, 193. "Explosion" quotation from *Al-Yarmuk*, June 15, 1930.
- 4 By "families most often associated with national leadership," I am referring obviously to the Husaynis, Nashashibis, and Khalidis. Of course, there were many examples of powerful families in Haifa involved in Palestinian politics, such as the al-Khatibs, who maintained long connections between Jerusalem and Haifa, yet these families were relatively much less powerful and spoke on behalf of far fewer Palestinians. On the links between communities in the north, see, for example, Malek Abisaab, "Shiite Peasants and a New Nation in Colonial Lebanon: The Intifada of Bint Jubayl, 1936," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 29, no. 3 (2009): 485.
- 5 The political demonstrations the mufti encouraged include the annual Nabi Musa celebrations. For more on this, see Eddie [Awad] Halabi, "The Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival in Jerusalem, 1917–1937: From Local and Islamic to Modern and Nationalist Celebration" (PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2007). The description of the mufti as "soft-spoken, reserved" is given by Rashid Khalidi, who also notes that the mufti had a "charismatic aura in small groups." Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 60.
- 6 "Possessed . . . high ethical . . ." quotation from Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir (Khalil Muhammad 'Issa 'Ajak): al-Qaid al-Qassamiyya lil-Thawra* 36–39, ed. Nazih Abu Nidal (Ramallah: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, 2010), 18. The description of al-Qassam's preaching as being like an "earthquake" comes from Nimr al-Khatib, *Ahdath al-Nakba* (Beirut: Dar Maktaba al-Haya, 1967), 154.
- 7 For more on Hadar HaCarmel during this period, see chapters 2 and 3 of Hayim Aharonovits, *Hadar ha-Karmel: Masekhet 'Amal yi-Yetsirah shel Dor Meyasdim u-Vonim* (Haifa: Va'ad Hadar ha-Karmel, 1958), and the memoirs of one of Haifa's most important Zionist leaders, David Hacohen, *Time to Tell: An Israeli Life, 1898–1984* (New York: Herzl Press, 1985).

- 8 Palestinian fears of an armed Jewish community stretch back to before the mandate—but 1921 in particular—when the Haifa Islamic Society, in its “Statement to the Civilized World” following the disturbances that year, noted the disparity in strength of arms. “*Bayan ila al-‘Alam al-Mutamadan*,” reproduced in ‘Abd al-Rahman Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah* (Damascus: Dar al-Jil li-l-Taba‘a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi‘, 1991), 44.
- 9 See Najati Sidqi, *Mudhakkirat Najati Sidqi* (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2001), 62.
- 10 Casualty statistics from the 1929 riots can be found in Great Britain, Palestine, *Commission on the Disturbances of August 1929*, vols. 1–3, Cmd. 3530 (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1930) (“Shaw Commission Report”); May Seikaly, *Haifa: Transformation of a Palestinian Arab Society, 1918–1939* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1995), 208–209. Reports from the Jewish Agency in Haifa in the immediate aftermath of the riots are available in the Haifa Municipal Archive and provide an excellent account of the often-difficult relationship between the Yishuv in the city and various members of the British administration, 79111/226/15 (HMA). The issue of the budget in Palestine is related to the self-funding policy under which Palestine was administered during the mandate. The Colonial Office insisted that the government of Palestine run a balanced budget throughout its mandate, a policy stretching back a century throughout the British Empire. Donald Creighton, writing about economic development in British North America, described mid-Victorian treasury officials, for whom “making things financially difficult for colonies was not only a public duty but a personal satisfaction.” John Knight details the way in which the reorganization of the Palestine Police following the 1929 riots served to institutionalize the Jewish National Home policy outlined in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. See John Knight, “Securing Zion? Policing in British Palestine, 1917–39” *European Review of History* 18, no. 4 (Aug 2011). The paucity of CID intelligence is described in detail in Tom Bowden, “Policing Palestine 1920–36: Some Problems of Public Security under the Mandate,” in *Police Forces in History*, ed. George Mosse (London: Sage, 1975), 117–119. On the matter of British policemen taking a more active role in policing, this seems to have been a difficult goal to realize. Most British policemen still did not speak Arabic or Hebrew and remained relegated to support roles. Knight, “Securing Zion?,” 529. On the number of CID members, see *Report on the Palestine Police Force by Mr. H. L. Dowbiggin, C.M.G.*, May 6, 1930, CO 935/4/2, p. 145 (BNA); Knight, “Securing Zion?,” 530.
- 11 Al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 26.
- 12 For a detailed map of Haifa and its neighborhoods in the final decade of the British Mandate, see Survey of Palestine, Army Map Service, Corps of Engineers, *Town Plans: Palestine, Haifa*, map, sheet 1, 1st ed., 1:10,000 (London: His Britannic Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1948). For a comprehensive discussion of Haifa’s position in the scheme of British development in Palestine, see Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 99. The harbor was completed in 1933, the rail workshop was completed in 1933, the Kingsway was completed in 1933, the oil pipeline was completed in 1934, and the construction of the refinery began in 1938.

- 13 A small number of residents of Wadi Salib would have been considered “middle class” and had lived in the quarter for generations. Many rented apartments in the larger stone buildings constructed under the Ottomans. One account of such a family can be found in Abdul-Latif H. Kanafani, *Haifa Diary: Reminiscences of an Octogenarian* (Beirut: Dar Nelson, 2014); Kanafani, *15 Shari’ al-Burj, Hayfa: Dhikrayat wa ‘Ibar* (Beirut: Bisan, 1996). While most Haifawis suffered under the new economic regime, “[foremost] among the cities during the 1930s, Haifa had witnessed the emergence of a Palestinian capitalist class, especially in the fields of commerce, import/export trade and construction, as well as in small industries servicing the Arab market, such as cigarettes. . . . This emerging stratum was, by virtue of its economic interests, more aligned to the aims of the conservative traditional leadership.” Seikaly, *Haifa*, 241. For more information on these class issues, see Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016). The outsourcing of contracts and subsequent minimum-wage violations would become the basis of a number of workplace grievances, including the 1932 strike at the Nesher cement quarry. See Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 207–210. Hauranis and Egyptians working at the port earned seventy to one hundred mils for a ten-hour work day, according to testimony given by Eliahu Epstein (Eilat) to the Shaw Commission. See Shaw Commission Report. See also George Mansur, “The Arab Worker under the Palestine Mandate (1937),” *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012). On Jewish dockworkers earning more and working less than Palestinians, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 140, 173; “Hauranis” in S25/10499 (CZA), which estimates that there were close to two thousand Syrians working in the Haifa port.
- 14 For more on how Palestinians and Arabs of the Mashriq were integrated into global economic systems before the First World War, see Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); James Gelvin and Nile Green, eds., *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print, 1850–1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).
- 15 “Previously I was working . . .” and subsequent quotations taken from “Statement from Khalil Mohamed Eissa,” January 12, 1933, 8/68 (HA). According to his memoirs, ‘Issa (better known as Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir) also worked as a postal clerk and later “opened a shop in the city market to sell wool, rice and grain.” See al-Kabir, *Mudhakirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 14–16. For Nesher Cement wages see Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies*, 207–210; Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 134–136.
- 16 For data on the Arab migration to Haifa during the British Mandate, see Mahmoud Yazbak, “Ha-Hagirah ha-Arabit le-Ḥayfah, 1933–1948,” *Cathedra* 45 (1987). For a general survey of the period, see Rachelle Taqqu, “Peasants into Workmen: Internal Labor Migration and the Arab Village Community under the Mandate,” in *Palestinian Society and Politics*, ed. Joel Migdal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980). For an anecdotal description of life as an economic migrant in Haifa, see, for instance, testimony of Taha Ahmed Taha in “Criminal Assize Case No. 5/33,” in the Henry Cat-

tan papers, 159/34 (ISA). For the population statistics of “Arabs” in Haifa, see table 2 of Yazbak, “Ha-Hagirah ha-Arabit le-Ḥayfah,” 133. For statistics on the number of tin hut structures, see Tamir Goren, “Efforts to Establish an Arab Workers’ Neighbourhood in British Mandatory Palestine,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 42, no. 6 (2006): 919. “Economic and physical deterioration . . .” quotation from Seikaly, *Haifa*, 223. “Miserable” and “deplorable” quotation found in handwritten note in “Insanitary Hutments on Outskirts of Haifa,” June 1937, CO 733/351/1 (BNA).

- 17 For crime rates, see Annual Police Summaries, 1931–1933, G. J. Morton Papers, Imperial War Museum Archive (IWMA). In addition to petty crimes, Wadi Salib made recurring appearances in news stories about assassinations during the 1936–1939 revolt. Take, for instance, the year 1937: in January, Dr. Taha Khalil Taha was shot dead near al-Istqlal Mosque. The assailant was “chased . . . into the Wadi Salib quarter” before the pursuit had to be abandoned; in September, the supervisor of Haifa’s *awqāf*, Ibrahim al-Khalil, was murdered and his assassins “fled towards Wadi Salib”; in December, a thirteen-year-old boy was shot in Hadar HaCarmel before the attacker “ran in the direction of Wadi Salib.” This latter incident, with no doubt an eye toward the earlier two events, earned the residents of Wadi Salib a collective punishment in the form of a fine ranging from 500 to 700 mils for every resident. See reports in the *Palestine Post* for January 29, September 5, and December 10 and 14, 1937. On begging and homelessness, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 224. On population density, see Goren, “Efforts to Establish an Arab Workers’ Neighbourhood in British Mandatory Palestine,” 919. For details of improvement proposals, see Haifa Municipal Archive—uncatalogued municipal council record (HMA). On the delay of electrification, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 222. The Auja Concession, which gave the Jaffa Electric Company Ltd. (later the Palestine Electric Company) the right to electrify the town of Jaffa, had been opposed by the nationalist mayor of Haifa, ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Hajj, in 1921, before he was replaced by Hasan Shukri, who worked closely with the Yishuv in the city. See Yitzchak Klein, *Ha-Ḳehilah ha-‘Arvit bi-Ḥefah bi-Teḳufat ha-Mandaṭ* (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1983), 37. Ronen Shamir points out that electric infrastructure had acted as an “urban unifier” in other cities in, say, the Americas, while its absence in Palestine “deepen[ed] or at least fail[ed] to slow down the incrementally growing divide between areas for Arabs and areas for Jews.” This widening gap in the mid-1920s is summarized further: “Those who are connected to an electric grid enjoy possibilities that are denied to the unconnected or to those yet to be connected.” Ronen Shamir, *Current Flow: The Electrification of Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), 70, 22. The sewage system is referenced in Yfaat Weiss, *A Confiscated Memory: Wadi Salib and Haifa’s Lost Heritage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 166. Presence of plague-infected rats detailed in “Insanitary Hutments on Outskirts of Haifa,” H. C. Wauchope to Ormsby-Gore, June 1937, CO 733/351/1 (BNA). Smallpox outbreak noted in “In Brief,” *Palestine Post*, December 30, 1934, 5.
- 18 Goren, “Efforts to Establish an Arab Workers’ Neighbourhood in British Mandatory Palestine,” 919.
- 19 In 1926, there were 2,776 residents of Hadar HaCarmel. See Aharonovits, *Hadar ha-*

Karmel, 94, 82–84. Advertisements found in the following pages: “To Let in Haifa,” *Palestine Post*, December 30, 1932, 7; “Haifa: The City of Tomorrow,” *Palestine Post*, December 18, 1932, 5.

- 20 On “urban colonial modernity” and for a description of similar plans as they pertained to Jaffa in the 1930s, see Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 171–177. For more on the colonial imperative toward the bulldozing of residential neighborhoods to make way for the building of wide boulevards in British possessions in the Middle East, see chapter 3 of Timothy Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988). Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Rabat: Urban Apartheid in Morocco* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), provides an interesting example of how French urban planning in the Moroccan city of Rabat was influenced by desires to segregate populations and offers an illuminating juxtaposition of British and Zionist goals in Haifa.
- 21 Norris, *Land of Progress*, 132.
- 22 For more on the 1927 election, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 202–205. This was also the election that saw David Hacohen elected as one of the two Jewish council members. He would go on to serve on the council for twenty-three years. In his brief reflection on his time in Haifa and on the council, he admits, with some surprise, “I never came across a single one, whether merchant, clerk, judge, lawyer, landowner, or simple citizen, Moslem or Christian, who welcomed, or at least understood, the Jews’ yearning for an independent state of their own in Palestine. I never met a single Arab who was ready to accept such a reality, even if his own civic rights and status were to be in no way impaired.” He goes on to list a number of Haifa’s nationalist opposition leaders and Christian community leaders, who all “absolutely rejected the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine.” Hacohen, *Time to Tell*, 196. On the issue of these civil society organizations, it should be noted that women were not without powerful and effective associations of their own during the British Mandate. See Ellen L. Fleischmann’s *The Nation and Its “New” Women: The Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). The nationalists would continue to lose elections into the 1930s. In 1934, al-Hajj Ibrahim lost again in ward 8 to the mayor, Hasan Shukri. The only nationalist candidate to win was Badr al-Din al-’Idi in Wadi Salib, one of the founders of the Haifa YMMA and who May Seikaly describes as a “nationalist lawyer and strong supporter of the al-Qassam movement.” Seikaly, *Haifa*, 233; Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin: Mudhakkirat Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, 1891–1953*, ed. Walid al-Khalidi (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2005), 150. There are some who translate the name of the organization slightly differently as “the Association of Muslim Youth” or “Society of Young Muslims,” deciding to emphasize the fact that the organization had different reasons for existing than the YMCA and that it was not necessarily a reactionary movement. Still, the “YMMA” remains the most common usage, and I’ve chosen to continue this practice. On the founding of the YMMA in Haifa, see ‘Ali Husayn Khalaf, “Tajribat al-Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, Madrasah Jami‘ al-Istiqlal,” *Shu‘un Filastiniyya* 126 (1982); al-Hajj

- Ibrahim, *al-Difaʿ ʿan Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 149. For more on the founding of the wider Palestinian YMMA, see Al-Hut, *Al-Qiyadat wa-l-Muʿassasat al-Siyasiyya fi Filastin*, 1917–1948, 188.
- 23 One of the founders of the Egyptian YMMA was Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, who was also an important Muslim Brother and associate of the modernist Azhari Rashid Rida and nationalist ʿIzzat Darwaza. “Organizational step towards . . .” quotation from Weldon Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 56. Henry Bowman was also a commissioner of the Baden-Powell Boy Scouts during his tenure in Palestine, showing that the connection between education and associations for young men could run in both nationalist and colonialist directions. For more on Bowman, see his memoirs: Humphrey Bowman, *Middle-East Window* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1942). While Bowman goes into great detail about his opinions of education in Palestine, apart from a single, passing mention on page 319, his presidency of the YMCA is ignored. “Social and financial segregation” from Seikaly, *Haifa*, 227. These sectarian lines were often ambiguous, or were instead related more to class than sect. For instance, there were later reports of nationalist Christians joining the YMMA, but little material remains to interrogate their motives and actions. The inverse was also true where Muslims, in particular those from middle- or upper-class families, joined the YMCA. Some government employees were encouraged to join the Christian association regardless of their faith, at least in the early years of the mandate. Further, some Muslim families had their children join the YMCA for other practical concerns, such as using the well-appointed YMCA facilities and residences in Jerusalem. For an example of the latter, see Kanafani, *Haifa Diary*, 70–71.
- 24 The other ten founders of the Haifa YMMA were Said Kassab, Muhammad Hashim al-Khatib, Badr al-Din al-ʿIdi, Rashdi Tamimi, Rafiq al-Salah, Badr al-Din al-Dabbagh, Saʿid al-Sabbagh, Anis al-Khuri, Hani Abu Muslih, and Ramzi ʿAmr. Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim claims the organization had a thousand members at its founding. Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *al-Difaʿ ʿan Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 150. Like the YMMA, scouting in the Middle East has a well-studied history. It, too, emerges in response to a specific British internationalist institution. These details of the initial meetings are taken from al-Hajj Ibrahim, *al-Difaʿ ʿan Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 150. There is also some evidence that the Haifa YMMA aided Haurani Syrians in their efforts to improve labor conditions as well (see “Hauranis Strike at Haifa Port,” *Davar*, 26/5/1935, in S25/10499 [CZA]) and that at least one Haurani shaykh held a leadership position in the Haifa YMMA (see Taha Ahmad Taha’s testimony during the Nahalal trial, “Criminal Assize Case No. 5/33, in the Henry Cattani Papers, 159/34[ISA]).
- 25 On the YMMA petition to have more Palestinians fill civil service jobs, see Norris, *Land of Progress*, 173.
- 26 Of course, the YMMA as an institution in and of itself—one that advocated for the self-improvement of Palestinian Muslims—was political. The “apolitical” nature of the legal requirement was really a way for the British to shut down organizations should their activities be deemed seditious or a threat to the colonial order. For more on the YMMA’s initial meetings, see ʿAbd al-Wahhab al-Kayyali, *Wathaʿiq al-*

- Muqawama al-Filastiniyya al-ʿArabiyya* (Beirut: Muʿassasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1968), 101; Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 228. Government workers and teachers being prevented from joining the YMMA is noted in Seikaly, *Haifa*, 228. Threats to the postal workers from management are recounted in “Statement from Khalil Mohamed Eissa,” January 12, 1933, 8/68 (HA). On the decline in “caliber,” see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 228.
- 27 Reports from the 1929 YMMA meeting can be found in *al-Jamiʿa al-ʿArabiyya*, August 6, 1929.
- 28 *Filastin*, October 15 and 18, 1932. For more on Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim and his role in promoting economic development, see Seikaly, *Men of Capital*, 15–30.
- 29 For the spread of the YMMA in the north, see Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *al-Difaʿ ʿan Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 150. For the resolutions of the national executive to “secretly train . . .” and “secretly call . . .” see Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *al-Difaʿ ʿan Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 151. On the jihadist cells, see Muhammad ʿIzzat Darwaza, *Mudhakirrat Muhammad ʿIzzat Darwaza, 1305–1404 H/1887–1984 M: Sijil Hafil bi-Masirat al-Harakat al-ʿArabiyya wa-l-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya Khilala Qarn min al-Zaman*, vols. 1–6 (Beirut: Dar al-Gharb al-Islami, 1993), 692.
- 30 S. Abdullah Schleifer, “The Life and Thought of ʿIzz Id-Din Al-Qassam,” *Islamic Quarterly* 5, no. 23 (1979): 76.
- 31 On the question of membership’s financial burden, this was true, for instance, of Khalil Muhammad ʿIssa and Ahmad Ghalayini of Haifa, both of whom claimed to have told YMMA officials that they weren’t able to pay their dues. See “Statement of Khalil Mohamed Eissa,” and “Statement of Ahmed Ibn Deeb el Ghalaini,” 8/68 (HA).
- 32 On the Boy Scouts in Haifa and the association between the Youth Congress and the YMMA, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 228. On al-Qassam’s involvement in the Boy Scouts, see Subhi Yasin, *Harb al-ʿIsabat fi Filastin* (Cairo: Dar al-Kitab al-ʿArabi, 1967), 63. For a brief biography of Nur Allah, see “ʿAtif Abd al-ʿAziz Nur Allah,” in *Mawsuʿat ʿUlamaʿ Filastin wa-l-Ayanuha*, ed. Yahya Jabr and ʿAbd al-Hadi Jawabira, vols. 1–4 (Nablus: Jamiʿat al-Najah al-Wataniyya, Daʿirat al-Maʿarif al-Filastiniyya, 2010), 391–393. On the meeting and proposed creation of a secretive youth society, see CID weekly summary #16, April 22, 1931, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR). For more on Hamdi al-Husayni, see Samih Shabeeb, *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-ʿArabi fi Filastin, 1932–1933* (Beirut: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, Markaz al-Abhath, 1981), 58–59.
- 33 Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakirrat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 18, 23.
- 34 In 1930, H. L. Dowbiggin made note of the difficulties surrounding the arming of colonies when he wrote, “The issue of rifles to Jewish colonies would probably be regarded by the Arabs as a provocative act and their issue might act as a direct incentive to armed bands to attack the colony and remove the rifles.” *Report on the Palestine Police Force by Mr. H. L. Dowbiggin, C.M.G. 6 May 1930*, CO 935/4/2 (BNA), 19. Dowbiggin misspoke when he said that rifles had been issued. In fact, shotguns (from the W. W. Greener Company) had been given to the colonies, much to their dismay, complaining that they were ineffective as defensive weapons. See League of Nations, *Minutes of the Permanent Mandates Commission*, twentieth session, June 9–27, 1931, 59–60. Palestine policeman Douglas Duff called these shotguns “useless” as weapons of defense

- against attacking forces and incapable of accommodating ammunition beyond that provided by the government. See Duff, *Palestine Picture*, 208. On the Arabic press's publication of these details, see CID weekly summary #28, July 15, 1931, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR). On demonstrations related to this issue, see for instance "Large Gathering in Nablus," *al-Jami'a al-Arabiyya*, July 15, 1931, 3.
- 35 Ibrahim's dispatch of Zayd is noted in "Secret Service Work," handwritten note (circa 1–14), August 1931, 8/21/78 (HA). "Send agents at once" quotation taken from "Public Movement & Propaganda" handwritten note (circa 1–14), August 1931, 8/29 (HA). Newspaper reports of arrests of smugglers trafficking everything from metal to tobacco were common. For instance, two smugglers were intercepted inbound from Syria in late February 1933 with loads of cigarette papers, an army revolver, a shotgun, and "229 cartridges"—shotgun or rifle ammunition—bound for Haifa. See *Palestine Post*, February 22, 1933, 5. On the speeches in Nablus, see CID weekly summary #29, July 25, 1931, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR). 'Izzat Darwaza and Fahmi al-'Abbushi were members of al-Istiqlal's Central Committee. See Shabeeb, *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-'Arabi fi Filastin*, 53; Al-Hut, *Al-Qiyadat wa-l-Mu'assasat al-Siyasiyya fi Filastin*, 879. "First organized youth protest" quotation from Seikaly, *Haifa*, 226. The Arab Executive recognized that the Nablus meeting was a political threat that it could not control. It organized a counter "National Congress of Arab Youth" in Jaffa a few months later, which called for, among other things, increased membership in the Boy Scouts. See also "Arab Incitement" report from O. G. R. Williams, September 3, 1931, CO 733/204/2 (BNA). In this report, Williams suggests that such suppression may not be the most effective strategy. Instead of stopping radical tendencies, preventing limited public disorder may have served to simply drive such activity underground. He goes on to lament that, despite the actions taken by the Palestine government to make arrests of nationalist ringleaders, "it is not easy to satisfy the Jews."
- 36 For a history of al-Istiqlal, see Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*; and Shabeeb, *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-'Arabi fi Filastin*, 1932–1933. Official statement, "Deputy Commissioner's Offices, 13 August, 1932," is reproduced in Darwaza, *Mudhakkirat Muhammad 'Izzat Darwaza*, vol. 1, 796–797. The problematic tensions in these three points are not easily explained away without some context on the place of Arab unity within the nationalist discourse of al-Istiqlal, its supporters, and press organs. Weldon Matthews describes it this way: "[The] circle of political organizers associated with *al-Hayat* [an Istiqlalist newspaper] emphasized the pan-Arab and pan-Syrian dimensions of Palestinian national identity, believing that the question of Palestine's independence was inseparable from that of Arab unity." Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 100. In the end, however, the issue is one of self-determination. The Istiqlalists wanted independence for all Arab countries, and for subsequent autonomy to choose to aggregate into whatever political unit they desired. On Greater Syria: The severing of Palestine from the political concept of "Greater Syria" was driven in part by the mufti's work at making Palestine a discrete political body connected in particular to the sanctity of the Haram al-Sharif (the Temple Mount) and its place within Islamic history. This Palestinian exceptionalism was further entrenched (intentionally or not) by a multitude of colonial practices. For a general discussion of this evolution, see Laila Parsons,

"Rebels without Borders: Southern Syria and Palestine, 1919–1936," in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle East Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (New York: Routledge, 2015), 395–409.

- 37 See details of the party's founding in the memoirs of 'Izzat Darwaza and Akram Zua'ytir. Darwaza and 'Abd al-Hadi were two of the most important Istiqlalists, though the connection between them and al-Qassam seems to be weaker. Darwaza, *Mudhakirrat Muhammad 'Izza Darwaza*, 692; Akram Zu'aytir, *Min Mudhakirrat Akram Zu'aytir*, vol. 1 (Beirut: al-Mu'assasat al-'Arabiyya, 1994). Some of al-Qassam's biographers disagree on the issue of his membership in the party. His name is missing, for instance, from the list of founders in Bayan Al-Hut's *Al-Qiyadat wa-l-Mu'assasat al-Siyasiyya fi Filastin, 1917–1948* (879). However, he is included in the two major works on the party in Arabic and English. In Shabeeb's *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-'Arabi fi Filastin*, he is listed as a representative from Haifa (50). However, like many of the al-Qassam biographies, Shabeeb's book was published in the 1980s (by the PLO no less), and the motives for including al-Qassam in the party's origin narrative warrants some suspicion. Weldon Matthews's dissertation appendix also lists al-Qassam as a Haifa representative, but he is not included in the similar appendix of the book. See Weldon Matthews, "The Arab Istiqlal Party in Palestine, 1927–1934" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1998), 338. Ultimately, the Istiqlal Party, while important for the history of the mandate, had little bearing on al-Qassam beyond the overlapping social and political networks each occupied. The party disbanded after only a couple of years in the absence of financial support from Palestinians (though it received support from other Arab countries, such as Iraq), among internecine differences between party members with *majlisi* and *mu'araqa* connections, and due to its marginal position: not quite traditional despite a core of notable support, and not quite populist despite its associative connections with the Boy Scouts and the YMMA. On this point, see Seikaly, *Haifa*, 229. For more on the works of the Istiqlal Party, see chapter 3 of Shabeeb, *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-'Arabi fi Filastin*; part two of Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*.
- 38 Reports of al-Qassam's election can be found in *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, July 21, 1932, 2. See also Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement* (London: Cass, 1974), 133. Subhi Yasin erroneously states that al-Qassam was elected president in 1926, in *Harb al-'Isabat fi Filastin*, 63. The theory that Ibrahim's handoff of the presidency to al-Qassam shows that the latter was getting ready for the revolt is put forward in Basheer M. Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 209. On the backlash against Ibrahim's presidency, see CID weekly summary #30, August 3, 1932, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR).
- 39 On the instrumentalism of historians recounting al-Qassam's involvement in the YMMA, it should be noted that this is true of hostile *and* sympathetic histories of al-Qassam. For examples of each, see Shai Lachman, "Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929–1939: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement," in *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, ed. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia Kedourie (London: F. Cass, 1982); Yasin, *Harb al-'Isabat fi Filastin*. The new YMMA branches are noted in CID weekly summary #43, November 2, 1932, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR).

- 40 On the surveillance of al-Khadra, see weekly CID summaries in L/PS/10/1315 (IOR). One French intelligence document describes al-Khadra, who had defected from the Ottoman army to join the Arab Revolt, as a “courageous” and “good soldier.” In the early days of the French occupation of Syria, he played an active role in encouraging anti-French insurgencies in the Biqā’ Valley. See “Sobki el Khadra,” January 16, 1920, *Affaires Étrangères, Services Spéciaux Renseignements*, 2199/1065 (CADN).
- 41 CID daily intelligence summary, #221, September 21, 1932, FO 371/15333 (BNA).
- 42 CID weekly summary #20, May 25, 1932, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR).
- 43 On the report of al-Qassam around the Battle of Hattin commemorations, see H. P. Rice, DC CID memo #31/32, August 10, 1932, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR). On the speeches by the members of al-Istiqlal, see CID weekly summary #35, September 9, 1932, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR); Shabeeb, *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-‘Arabi fi Filastin*.
- 44 This narrative of al-Qassam getting into trouble with the British is described in Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 153.
- 45 “Criminal Investigation Department Daily Intelligence Summary, No. 221, September 21, 1931,” FO 371/15333 (BNA).
- 46 CID weekly summary #44, November 11, 1932, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR).
- 47 “Fiery Speeches Were Delivered at Gathering of the Istiqlal Party in Haifa,” *Filastin*, December 16, 1932, 5; “Gathering of the Istiqlal Party in Haifa,” *Mirat al-Sharq*, December 17, 1932, 4; “Prevention of Crime Ordinance,” November 5, 1932, CO 733/227/14 (BNA). It’s certainly possible that he addressed the crowd. Al-Istiqlal gatherings often featured significant Haifa YMMA presence. For instance, at the four-year anniversary of the executions of Jumjum, Hijazi, and al-Zayr at a gathering in Acre organized by the Istiqlalists, *Filastin* offered coverage of each speech. “Words of the Young Men’s Muslim Association of Haifa” appears immediately after “words of Professor [al-Ustadh] Akram Zu‘aytir” and immediately before “words of Professor [al-Ustadh] Badr al-Din al-Khatib.” While it does not specify who gave the speech on behalf of the Haifa YMMA, and though the most likely candidate is Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, the centrality of the Haifa YMMA at least suggests that al-Qassam was present at such gatherings. See “Large Commemoration in Memory of the Martyrs in Acre and Safad,” *Filastin*, June 18, 1933, 6.

Chapter 7: Nahalal, 1932

- 1 This narrative of the events that took place on the night of December 23, 1932, is drawn largely from three sources: the police interview with Mustafa ‘Ali Ahmad, verbatim testimony given at his trial, and the memoirs of Ahmad Tawbah, which corroborate many points made in the latter. See “Statement from Mustafa Ali Ahmed, Haifa,” May 29, 1933, in “Palestine Internal Security Dec 1937–May 1938,” Tegart Papers, box 2, file 3 (MEC); “Criminal Assize Case No. 5/33, in the Henry Cattar Papers, 159/34 (ISA); Ghazi Tawbah, ed., *Saffuriyya wa-l-Mujahid wa-l-Fata* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2011), 24–26. The identity of the men who actually made this trip remains unclear. Here, I’ve named the men that Tawbah identifies in his memoirs, not the men Ahmad identified in his statement to the police. It had been a wet week in Palestine, yet the

- three had failed to take note that the rains were forecast to end the next morning, hardening their footprints for investigators to follow back to Saffuriyya the next day. For weather reports, see page 8 of the the *Palestine Post* for that week.
- 2 The Yaacobi narrative comes from testimony given by Joseph's wife, Shulamit, at the trial of 'Ali Ahmad and Ghalayini. See the Henry Cattán Papers, 183/10 (ISA). Crime scene photographs were published in the newspaper *Haaretz* on March 10, 1933. Clippings in the Haganah Archives IS 8/67 (HA). The Haganah file also includes pictures of a reconstruction of the bomb that were entered into evidence at trial. It featured a long fuse, which was likely the source of the smoke in the room.
 - 3 For a history of Nahalal from the colony's founders, see the pamphlet produced in advance of its twentieth anniversary in 1940: Mazkirut Tenua'at Ha-Moshavim, *Nahalal: bi-Melot 'Esrím Shanah le-Hiyasdah* (Tel Aviv: Hotsa'at Mazkirut Tenua'at Ha-Moshavim, [1940]). The practice of housing children together traces its origins to the ideological foundations of the kibbutz movement. Describing the practice in 1938, Edwin Samuel writes: "It was also regarded as desirable in principle that all children should be brought up on identical lines from birth to ensure equality of opportunity and early adaptation to communal life." See Edwin Samuel, *Handbook of the Jewish Communal Villages in Palestine* (Jerusalem: The Zionist Organization Youth Department, 1945), 15.
 - 4 "The Terror," S25/10499 (CZA). On Yajur, see "Murder in Yajur" *Davar*, April 9, 1931, 1. Yajur is also the name of the adjacent Palestinian village; see also CID Report on the "Ahava Yajour Murder," May 9, 1931, CO 733/204/2 (BNA). In this report, Assistant District Superintendent of Police Baker of the CID reports that two groups held information on this attack: the shaykhs of the Druze villages south of Haifa, from where police believed the attackers came, and "the heads of the Young Men's Moslem Association in Haifa." On Kfar Hasidim, see "Another Jewish Farmer Killed," *Palestine Bulletin*, March 6, 1932, 4. On the sentiment in the Yishuv toward the police investigation, see, for example, the editorial "The Nahalal Outrage" in the *Palestine Post*, January 1, 1933, 8. One newspaper in the Yishuv obliquely referenced this pressure when it reported that, while the head of the CID was personally in command of the investigation, the inspector-general of the Palestine Police had full confidence in the CID and had not yet taken over. See *Palestine Post*, February 18, 1933.
 - 5 *Palestine Post*, January 1, 1933.
 - 6 Criminal Assize Court Transcript, Henry Cattán Papers, 183/10 (ISA).
 - 7 Criminal Assize Court Transcript, Henry Cattán Papers, 183/10 (ISA); "Nahalal Bomb Outrage," *Palestine Post*, February 24, 1933, 5; "Nahalal Bomb Suspects Committed," *Palestine Post*, March 19, 1933, 1.
 - 8 Criminal Assize Court Transcript, Henry Cattán Papers, 183/10 (ISA); "Terrorist Gang Discovered," *Palestine Post*, July 27, 1933. The latter article goes on to describe the Saffuriyya YMAA's activities, including the involvement of the Haifa YMAA's "Sheikh Izzat Din Kassab."
 - 9 "Statement from Mustafa Ali Ahmed, Haifa," May 29, 1933, Tegart Papers (MEC).
 - 10 "Statement from Mustafa Ali Ahmed," Tegart Papers (MEC). Again, here we see the discrepancy between 'Ali Ahmad's testimony implicating Ghalayini and 'Issa, and

- Tawbah's memoirs, which say that Tawbah and 'Ali Ahmad were joined by a Salih Ahmad Taha.
- 11 All quotations from "Statement from Mustafa Ali Ahmed," May 29, 1933, Tegart Papers (MEC).
 - 12 "Fitzgerald to Tegart, 11/12/1937," Tegart Papers, box 2, file 3 (MEC).
 - 13 "Confession Withdrawn in Nahalal Case," *Palestine Post*, October 1, 1933, 1. The lawyer 'Ali Ahmad had described was later identified as "Sherif al-Zo'bi" and was likely from the large al-Zu'bi family of Nazareth, which, during the mandate, gained notoriety when some of its members were active Palestinian collaborators with the Haganah and facilitators of land sales in the Galilee. At midnight on February 3, 1937, unknown assailants shot Sharif al-Zu'bi in Nazareth, leaving him alive but wounded. *Al-Liwa'* reported that Mustafa 'Ali Ahmad's brother was later arrested for the shooting. See "Nazareth Advocate Shot on His Way Home," *Palestine Post*, February 3, 1937, 1. The details of 'Ali Ahmad's alleged coercion by the police are expanded upon in both Abu Ibrahim's and Tawbah's memoirs. See "Confession of Mustafa 'Ali al-Ahmad" in Tawbah, *Saffuriyya wa-l-Mujahid wa-l-Fata*, 26; Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir (Khalil Muhammad 'Issa 'Ajak): al-Qaid al-Qassamiyya li-l-Thawra* 36–39, ed. Nazih Abu Nidal (Ramallah: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, 2010), 31.
 - 14 It was also used by members of the Revisionist Party to call on the British not only to allow Jewish colonies to acquire weapons and receive training in their use by the administration, but also to finance a Jewish "self-defense" force, since the British maintained "with Jewish money" an Arab military unit in the Transjordan (referring to the Arab Legion). See "Memo from Deputy Superintendent for Police, E. W. Lucie-Smith," January 11, 1933, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR); "Anti-Jewish Terrorist Plot Revealed," *Palestine Post*, September 27, 1933, 1. The Arabic press took a different tack. In an editorial published in *Mirat al-Sharq*, the author suggests that if such a conspiracy to "kill innocent people" existed then those responsible should certainly be punished, but that Palestinians should not accept accusing a "respectable association" such as the YMMA of such a "barbaric act." See "The Nahalal Case," *Mirat al-Sharq*, July 29, 1933, 5.
 - 15 "Court Hears about Anti-Jewish Plots," *Palestine Post*, September 28, 1933, 1. In his testimony to the court, Taha also explicitly mentions that the "Chairman of the Jewish community of Hadar HaCarmel" was on the YMMA's "blacklist," implying that he was a target for violence.
 - 16 "Two Death Sentences in Nahalal Murder," *Palestine Post*, October 6, 1933, 1.
 - 17 "Terrorist Gang in the North," *Palestine Post*, October 8, 1933, 1.
 - 18 While the judge was likely right to dismiss the charges, Khalil Muhammad 'Issa was a member of a secret society. Using the *kunya* Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, 'Issa had indeed been involved in organizing a secretive movement in the north and took a major role as a rebel-band leader in northern Palestine after the outbreak of open revolt in 1936. He commanded the Qassamites during the revolt and was a nominal member of the revolt's central committee in Damascus. More discussion of Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir will follow in the next chapter.

- 19 On Naif, see “Murder of Inspector Naif,” *Palestine Post*, August 5, 1936, 7. In his memoirs, nationalist lawyer Hanna Naqqara recounts how a poor fellah teenager—known as “Nimr”—accidentally blew his hand off in a latrine with a bomb. Inspector Naif interrogated him on the scene and allowed him to bleed to death. Naif was so hated that initially an armed guard had to be assigned to his gravesite in Balad al-Shaykh for fear that his corpse would be stolen and removed from the cemetery—the same cemetery, incidentally, in which al-Qassam is now interred. See Hanna Dib Naqqara, *Mudhakkirat Muḥamin Filastini: Hanna Dib Naqqara, Muḥami al-Ard wa-l-Shaʿb*, ed. ʿAta Allah Saʿid Qubti (Beirut: Muassasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2011), 105. On Basta’s killing, see “Senior Police Officer Murdered in Haifa,” *Palestine Post*, April 16, 1937, 1. Basta, along with David Hacohen, was also involved in breaking the Arab strike at the quarry supplying the Neshet cement factory; see David Hacohen, *Time To Tell: An Israeli Life, 1898–1984* (New York: Herzl Press, 1985), 90.
- 20 Yehoshua Porath, relying on a single source, likely overstates the organization’s strength at four hundred men by 1934 and one hundred “guns and pistols”; Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement* (London: Cass, 1974), 131. The “Rebel Youth” (al-Shabab al-Thaʿir) operated in the Tulkarm-Qalqillya area in 1935 and was composed mostly of members of the local Boy Scouts organization. See memos from “Najib” to Jewish Agency marked Tulkarem, in S25/3875 (CZA).
- 21 “Terrorism 1936–1937,” Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3C (MEC). For more on the Green Hand Gang, see Kamil Mahmud Khillah, *Filastin wa-l-Intidab al-Britani, 1922–1939* (Beirut: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, Markaz al-Abhath, 1974), 306–307. See also Memo from HC Chancellor to SS Passfield, February 22, 1930, CO 733/190/5 (BNA); CID Report on the Ahava Yajour Murder, May 9, 1931, CO 733/204/2 (BNA). Safad and its surrounding villages seem to have been particularly well armed, a fact that appears frequently in secret CID dispatches. See also “Political Suspects Movements on July 23, 1931” [handwritten note] 8/29 (HA).
- 22 See “The Sheikh Izzedin Al-Qassam Gang,” Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3C (MEC). The Tegart document erroneously refers to a “Shaykh Badr al-Din al-Husayni”; see Basheer M. Nafi, “Shaykh ʿIzz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997), 209.
- 23 For more on Shaykh al-Hasani, see Itzhak Weismann, “The Invention of a Populist Islamic Leader: Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥasanī, the Religious Educational Movement and the Great Syrian Revolt,” *Arabica* 52 (2005). For a biographical sketch, see Muhammad Muʿī Hafiz and Nizar Abazah, *Tarikh ʿUlamaʿ Dimashq fi al-Qarn al-Rabiʿ Ashar al-Hijri*, vol. 1 (Damascus: Dar al-Fikr, 1986), 473–494. For a longer study of al-Hasani, see an account by one of al-Hasani’s most well-known students, Muhammad Salih al-Farfur, *al-Muhaddith al-Akbar wa-Imam al-ʿAsr al-ʿAllama al-Zahid al-Sayyid al-Sharif al-Shaykh Muhammad Badr al-Dīn al-Hasani Kama ʿArafatuh* (Damascus: Dar al-Imam Abi Hanifah, 1986).
- 24 Subhi Yasin, *Harb al-ʿIsabat fi Filastin* (Cairo: Dar al-Katib al-ʿArabi li-l-Tibaʿa wa-al-Nashr, 1967), 68–70. In an interview archived at Birzeit University, outside of Ramallah, Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir insists that there was no such split. See Abu Ibrahim

- al-Kabir interview [n.d.] (BIR). Further, Qassamite 'Arabi Badawī insisted that al-Qassam's group was "democratic" and that al-Qassam solicited input from members of his group instead of making decisions unilaterally. See Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936–39 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 117.
- 25 CID Weekly Report #6, February 18, 1933, L/PS/10/1315 (IOR).
- 26 Rashid Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *al-Difa' 'an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin: Mudhakkirat Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, 1891–1953*, ed. Walid al-Khalidi (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2005), 153. On surveillance, see "Terrorism 1936–1937," Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3C (MEC); Ibrahim, *al-Difa' 'an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 155; Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 31.
- 27 *Filastin*, November 23, 1935; also quoted in Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa'i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jam'ia al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya, 1985), 53.
- 28 On the initial surveillance of, and vouching for, new members, see Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 22. On the oath of secrecy, see Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir; untitled handwritten note dated December 11, 1937, Tegart Papers, box 2, file 3 (MEC).
- 29 There is little doubt that Dayan's use of the term "Kassamiya" was an apocryphal addition, yet it does illustrate the cultural milieu in which al-Qassam was operating. Moshe Dayan, *Moshe Dayan: Story of My Life* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), 19.
- 30 For a description of King Faysal's funerary arrangements in Haifa, see *al-Karmil*, September 23, 1933; Kamal al-Khalidi, *Hayfa al-Bidaya wa Filastin al-Mustaqarr Shahada* (Beirut: Dar al-Ruwad, n.d.), 28. On the Istiqlalist endorsement of Ghazi, see Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 194.
- 31 For news accounts of the hanging, see *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, February 27, 1934.
- 32 Sixteen thousand in the first eight months of 1933, compared to ten thousand in 1932, and four thousand in 1931. See League of Nations, *Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom . . . to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1933*, December 31, 1933.
- 33 Details of the events in Haifa can be found in "Report of the Commission Appointed by His Excellency Commissioner for Palestine," *Palestine Gazette*, November 16, 1933 (Murison Report) 352/2 (ISA); also in CO/733/258/2 (BNA).
- 34 For descriptions of Keith-Roach as "best tax administrator," "merciless," etc., see May Seikaly, *Haifa: Transformation of a Palestinian Arab Society, 1918–1939* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1995), 57. For the Municipal Corporation Ordinance, see Palestine Government, *Supplement No. 1 to the Palestine Gazette Extraordinary No. 414*, January 12, 1934, Municipal Corporations Ordinance, 1934. On the new municipal councils, see League of Nations, *Report by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom . . . to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the year 1934*, December 31, 1934. For a popular response to these new councils, see for instance *al-Karmil*, June 22, 1932.

- 35 High Commissioner to Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 8, 1934, CO 733/257 (BNA).
- 36 Twenty-five “operations” from Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 27. “The shaykh to go back to work” from Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 66.
- 37 “Arabs denounce Britain and Jews on Balfour Day,” *Palestine Post*, November 3, 1935; “[Large gathering in Haifa],” *Al-Jami‘a al-‘Arabiyya*, November 4, 1935. Telegram from Officer Administering the Government of Palestine to Secretary of State for the Colonies, October 22, 1935, CO 733/278/13 (BNA).
- 38 Untitled handwritten note dated December 11, 1937, Tegart Papers, box 2, file 3 (MEC). Later, British intelligence would claim that they “knew immediately” that al-Qassam had absconded to the hills, but their shambolic response to his death would suggest otherwise.

Chapter 8: With the Qur’an as a Passport

- 1 “With the Qur’an as a Passport” is a description given of al-Qassam’s move to the hills published in *al-Difa‘*, January 8, 1936. For details of the Jaffa arms discovery, see Telegram from Officer Administering the Government of Palestine to Secretary of State for the Colonies, October 22, 1935, CO 733/278/13 (BNA). See also Sha’ul Avigdor, Yehudah Slutski, and Gershon Rivlin, *Ḳitsur Toldot ha-Haganah* (Tel Aviv: Miśrad ha-Biṭaḥon ha-Hotsa’ah le-or, 1978).
- 2 For details of al-Qassam’s conversations with al-Hajj Ibrahim and Abu Ibrahim, see Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jam‘ia al-Dirasat al-‘Arabiyya, 1985), 69. For Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim’s version of events, see his *Al-Difa‘ ‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin: Mudhakkirat Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, 1891–1953*, ed. Walid al-Khalidi (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2005), 153. “I am confident . . .” quotation from Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir* (Khalil Muhammad ‘Issa ‘Ajaj): *al-Qaid al-Qassamiyya li-l-Thawra* 36–39, ed. Nazih Abu Nidal (Ramallah: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, 2010), 43; ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘Aman ma’a al-Qafla al-‘Arabiyya: Mudhakkirat ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid* (Beirut: Dar al-Istiqlal, 1993), 181.
- 3 The exchange between Abu Ibrahim and al-Qassam is retold in Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 44–45.
- 4 Maymana al-Qassam would go on to take an active role in the Palestinian women’s movement, accompanying prominent women from Palestine to Cairo in 1938 for the Eastern Women’s Congress. There, she delivered a speech to a “storm of applause.” See *Mu’tamar al-Nisa’i al-Sharqi: al-Mar’a al-‘Arabiyya wa-Qadiyat Filastin* (Cairo: Ittihad al-Nisa’i al-Misri, 1938). See also Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its “New” Women: The Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 184–185. Report of the conversation between Maymana and ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam appears in Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 65. The description of the final conversation between Amina and ‘Izz al-Din was reported by ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid in his speech at the *arba’in*; see *al-Difa‘*, January 8, 1936.
- 5 This description of al-Qassam’s final sermon at al-Istiqlal comes from an interview

- conducted with a witness, “Yusuf al-Shayib,” in Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 70. I’ve used N. J. Dawood’s translation for Penguin Classics of the Qur’an; the waiting car is cited in Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 45.
- 6 See Ibrahim al-Shaykh Khalil, “Risala min Mujahid Qadim: Dhikriyyat ‘an al-Qassam,” *Shu‘un Filastiniyya* 7 (March 1972). For al-Qassam’s use of the hadith, see Subhi Yasin, *Al-Thawra al-‘Arabiyya al-Kubra (fi Filastin)*, 1936–1939 (Damsacus: Dar al-Huna, 1961), 20. For reports on the content of sermons, see Weekly CID summaries in L/PS/10/1315 (IOR).
 - 7 While this memo does not explicitly say that ‘Amr informed the CID on these particular matters, it does indicate that he had been an informant in the past (without reference to what he was explicitly informing on) and, in a later note, that an additional two hundred Palestinian pounds would be allocated to getting ‘Amr out of Haifa. “Submission 7,” handwritten note appended to CID Report on the Ahava Yajour Murder, May 9, 1931, CO 733/204/2 (BNA).
 - 8 Khalil, “Risala min Mujahid Qadim.”
 - 9 “Report from Haifa,” S25/4127 (CZA).
 - 10 For al-Qassam’s plan, see Khalil, “Risala min Mujahid Qadim.” On al-Makhzumi, see ‘Abd al-Rahman Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah* (Damascus: Dar al-Jil li-l-Taba‘a wa-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi‘, 1991), 48. While both Murad and Shurrab give this date as the night of the meeting at al-Makhzumi’s home, the exact day that al-Qassam left Haifa is unknown. On the connection with the Italian consulate, see Yasin, *Al-Thawra al-‘Arabiyya al-Kubra*, 23.
 - 11 On the organization’s structure, see Yasin, *Al-Thawra al-‘Arabiyya al-Kubra*, 23. On al-Bayir and al-Sa‘di, see *Filastin*, November 23, 1935; Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 53. On al-Bayir’s attempted weapons purchase, see *al-Difa‘*, March 2, 1936. On the type of weapons used, see Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 24.
 - 12 The existence of a Turkish Army officer is reported in “The November Events in Northern Palestine,” report by “A. H. C.” [Aaron Haim Cohen], December 12, 1935, S25/4224 (CZA).
 - 13 On Muhammad Abu ‘Ayun, see Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 24.
 - 14 See Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 71; Yasin, *Al-Thawra al-‘Arabiyya al-Kubra*, 28; Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 47.
 - 15 For more on the influence of other rebellions on al-Qassam, see Basheer M. Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader,” *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 196; Ted Swedenburg, “Role of the Palestinian Peasantry in the Great Revolt (1936–1939),” in *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements*, ed. Edmund Burke and Ira Lapidus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 189.
 - 16 Ghassan el-Khazen states that al-Qassam “categorically refused the joining of notables or their children.” El-Kazen, *La Grande Révolte Arabe de 1936 en Palestine* (Beirut: Éditions Dar an-Nahar, 2005), 176. “From the poor . . .” quotation is from “The Sheikh Izzedin Al-Qassam Gang,” Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3C (MEC). “Look, my hair has turned white . . .” quotation is from a posthumously published interview in *Filastin*, November 22, 1935, and is also quoted in Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 52. Abu

- Ibrahim al-Kabir estimate is from Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 19.
- 17 Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 153.
 - 18 I use the past tense for the villages of Nuris and al-Mazar, as both were depopulated and destroyed in May 1948. See Walid Khalidi, *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 337–339.
 - 19 Husni Adham Jarar, *Al-Shaykh Farhan al-Sa‘di, al-Shaykh Furayz Jarrar, al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Muzaffar* (Amman: Dar al-Diya’, 1988), 29. See also Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘Aman ma’a al-Qabila al-Arabiyya*, 189.
 - 20 The “Jezreel Valley” refers more to the area north of Jabal Faquq’a and east, ending in a point in the Jordan River valley. The “plain of Esdraelon,” on the other hand, refers to the westward half of the Marj, including the valley west of Jabal Faquq’a and running north of the Carmel range. Nuris and al-Mazar are thus in the Marj Ibn ‘Amr and the Esdraelon plain.
 - 21 This of course puts the lie to the foundational Zionist motto of a “land without people for a people without land,” but also to the suggestion made by High Commissioner Herbert Samuel in 1925 that the area was little more than a “wilderness” before the arrival of Jewish settlers. See Laurence Oliphant, *Haifa: or, Life in Modern Palestine* (New York: Charles A. Dana, 1886), 59–60. For Samuel quotation, see Great Britain, Palestine, *Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development*, Cmd. 3686 (London, His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1930) (hereafter “Hope Simpson report”), 16. For more on Oliphant and his position on the development of the Marj Ibn ‘Amr, see Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 47–48.
 - 22 See Hope Simpson Report, 7 and 21. See also Mahmoud Yazbak, “From Poverty to Revolt: Economic Factors in the Outbreak of the 1936 Rebellion in Palestine,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 36 (July 2000): 101; Kenneth W. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine, 1917–1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 59–60. On the depopulation that followed the Sursuq deal, see Ann Mosely Lesch, *Arab Politics in Palestine, 1917–1939: The Frustration of a Nationalist Movement* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 67–75.
 - 23 For an account of the relationship between al-Sa‘di and the people of the villages of Nuris and al-Mazar, see for instance “Statement of Mohamed Niji Abu Rub,” November 30, 1937, and “Statement of Hussein Mohamed Hussein Salameh,” December 20, 1937, both in Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3 (MEC). On al-Sa‘di’s experience in the First World War and his concern for weapons discipline, see Jarar, *Al-Shaykh Farhan al-Sa‘di*, 30–31. For more on the Ottoman weapons being used by the Qassamites, see Zuhayr Al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma’ al-Hajj Amin* (Beirut: Dar al-‘Irfan, 1977), 981. For rebel complaints on misfires, see “Statement of Hussein Mohamed Hussein Salameh,” December 20, 1937, in which Salameh recounts complaints among al-Sa‘di’s men about defective ammunition.
 - 24 On al-Sa‘di and his role, see Jarar, *Al-Shaykh Farhan al-Sa‘di*, 30. On the sale of personal goods for purchasing weapons, see Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma’rakatuha al-*

- Akhirah*, 49. For the anecdote about Shaykh ‘Attiya, see Hanna Dib Naqqara, *Mudhakkirat Muhamin Filastini: Hanna Dib Naqqara, Muhami al-Ard wa-l-Sha‘b*, ed. ‘Ata Allah Sa‘id Qubti (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2011), 104–105.
- 25 Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir interview [n. d.] (BIR).
- 26 On weapons smuggling, see comments from Maymana al-Qassam in Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir*, 42. Narrative based on a verbatim oral interview of Tahqla Faris of Umm al-Fahm in Mary Boger, “A Ghetto State of Ghettos: Palestinians under Israeli ‘Citizenship’” (PhD diss., CUNY, 2008), 547.
- 27 Al-Qassam’s selling of personal belongings to finance the revolt is detailed in Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 49. “High life” comment from Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir interview [n. d.] (BIR).
- 28 Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘ ‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 154.
- 29 “The November Events in Northern Palestine,” report by A. H. C. [Aaron Haim Cohen], December 12, 1935, S25/4224 (CZA); Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 72. For note on the kibbutz, see “Palestine-Syria Customs Agreement, 1929,” in *Palestine Gazette*, no. 574, March 5, 1936.
- 30 For police decisions in the early hours after Rosenfeld’s death, see Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 74. Before Rosenfeld’s death there had been few casualties among the police. Even at the worst of the riots in 1929 or 1933, the police suffered little more than injuries. This changed after Rosenfeld’s death and the beginning of the 1936–1939 Revolt, when a number of police were killed in a wave of assassinations many ascribed to the Qassamites. For more on policing in Palestine, see Tom Bowden, “Policing Palestine 1920–36: Some Problems of Public Security under the Mandate,” in *Police Forces in History*, ed. George Mosse (London: Sage, 1975).
- 31 “The Fight with the Arab Terrorists,” report from E. S. [Eliyahu Sasson], November 21, 1935, S25/3473 (CZA); “The November Events in Northern Palestine,” January 20, 1936, S25/4224 (CZA); Ezra Danin and Ya‘akov Shimoni, *Te‘udot u-Demuyot mi-Ginze ha-Kenufiyot ha-‘Arabiyot bi-Me‘or‘ot 1936–1939* (Jerusalem: Hotsa‘at Sefarim Y. L. Magnes [Hebrew University], 1981), 129–130.
- 32 Khalaf’s death is reported in *Filastin*, November 19, 1935. For another description of the Battle of al-Barid, see Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 75.
- 33 The split is noted in *Filastin*, November 19, 1935; See also Jarar, *Al-Shaykh Farhan al-Sa‘di*, 31. Other sources, some citing ‘Arabi Badawi, indicate that Farhan al-Sa‘di was not with the Qassamites when Rosenfeld was killed and had been back in his home in Nuris. Some indicate that the northbound group was instead led by Shaykh Dawud Khattab. See Hammuda, *Al-Wa‘i wa-l-Thawra*, 76. For a note on the remaining group, see al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma‘ al-Hajj Amin*, 983.
- 34 Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 48; S. Abdullah Schleifer, “The Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” *Islamic Quarterly* 5, no. 23 (1979): 61.
- 35 Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 48. See also “The Fight with the Arab Terrorists,” November 21, 1935, S25/3473 (CZA). Farhan al-Sa‘di turning back from Jarar, *Al-Shaykh Farhan al-Sa‘di*, 31. Scout report described in Muhammad Kamil al-Qassab and Muhammad ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan fi Daf‘a Awham*

- Khuziran*, ed. Muhammad Zuhayr al-Shawish (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 2001), 19; Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 48–49.
- 36 “Fight to the last drop of blood” quotation from Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 49. “Die a martyr’s death” quotation from *Filastin*, November 21, 1935; see also Schleifer, “Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam,” 61. “O’ Qur’an! . . .” quotation from al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘ 'an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 154.
- 37 On the gunfight: three hours is the length given in Nafi, “Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam,” 185; eight hours is from al-Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma‘ al-Hajj Amin*, 983. On the position of the Qassamites, see Murad, *Safhat 'an Hayfa wa Ma'rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 50. For more details on the battle, see *Palestine Post*, November 21 and 22, 1935. The *Palestine Post*—the English-language newspaper of the Yishuv—put forward a claim meant to discredit the Qassamites: that members of the group surrendered with white flags before opening fire on the advancing police. This claim is repeated nowhere else, including the British and Zionist archival sources, which had little reason to exclude such a point had it in fact been true. Al-Qassam’s wound is reported in Murad, 50.
- 38 Note on villagers from author interview with Ahmad al-Qassam in Nazlat Shaykh Zayd, Palestine, January 18, 2015. Abdallah al-Salim is identified on al-Qassam’s death certificate, “Department of Health, Certificate of Death No. 3824,” Personal Papers of the al-Qassam Family. For the matter of the bodies arriving in Haifa, see al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘ 'an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 154.
- 39 “Cried like a boy . . .” quotation and note on Subhi al-Khadra from an untitled document dated November 21, 1935, S25/4224 (CZA). Zu‘aytir’s message is noted in “The Fight with the Arab Terrorists,” S25/3473 (CZA).
- 40 British communiqué published in the *Palestine Post*, November 21, 1935.
- 41 “The Fight with the Arab Terrorists” Report from E. S. [Eliyahu Sasson], November 21, 1935, S25/3473 (CZA). Ben-Gurion was right to compare the two men not only because of their symbolic position within their respective nationalisms, but because of the malleability of that very symbolism for different political currents. For a discussion of Tel Hai’s role in Israeli nationalism see Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 39–47.
- 42 See *al-Jami‘a al-Islamiyya* and *Filastin* for November 21, 1935. See also “The Terror,” [n. d.] S25/10499 (CZA); *Filastin*, November 22, 1935.
- 43 Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘ 'an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 155. For more on the funeral, see Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘Aman ma‘a al-Qabila al-‘Arabiyya*, 181–182.
- 44 “Dear and sainted friend . . .” quotation from Shai Lachman, “Arab Rebellion and Terrorism in Palestine 1929–1939: The Case of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam and His Movement,” in *Zionism and Arabism in Palestine and Israel*, ed. Elie Kedourie and Sylvia Kedourie (London: F. Cass, 1982). “None has served . . .” quotation from Hassan Yacoubi, *They Killed You!* (Islamic University of Gaza [966], November 25, 1935), quoted in Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), 12–13.

- 45 The lower crowd size estimate comes from the Qassamite Ibrahim Shaykh Khalil, who says “hundreds—maybe thousands,” while higher numbers are given by Rashid al-Hajj Ibrahim, who estimated 20,000 to 25,000, and *Filastin*. It’s not certain that Khalil was even in Haifa at the time of the funeral, as he was most likely in hiding somewhere in northern Palestine. See Ibrahim al-Shaykh Khalil, “Risala min Mujahid Qadim”; al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘ ‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 155; *Filastin*, November 22, 1935. Procession stretching for miles in Khalid ‘Awad, *Nuh Ibrahim: Sha‘ir wa-Shahid Thawrat 1936* (Nazareth: Matba‘at Vinu, 1990), 70; Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘Aman ma’a al-Qafila al-‘Arabiyya*, 181. Eulogies elsewhere in Palestine from Murad, *Safhat ‘an Hayfa wa Ma‘rakatuha al-Akhirah*, 49. The *tahli*l and *takbir* chants are noted in Al-Hajj Ibrahim, 155–158.
- 46 Collection of condolence messages from the al-Qassam family papers. The two Qur’anic verses translated here are 9:111 and 3:169, respectively. The latter would be inscribed on al-Qassam’s original tombstone.
- 47 Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘Aman ma’a al-Qafila al-‘Arabiyya*, 186; Al-Hajj Ibrahim, *Al-Difa‘ ‘an Hayfa wa Qadiyat Filastin*, 155.
- 48 *Al-Jami‘a al-Islamiyya*, December 11, 1935; *al-Difa‘*, November 20, 1935.
- 49 Raghib al-Nashashibi is quoted as saying that if the reply from the high commissioner to a detailed list of demands was not satisfactory in the eyes of the party leaders, they would resign en masse. “Notes from an Interview Granted by His Excellency the High Commissioner to the Leaders of the Arab Parties at Government House . . . on November 25, 1935,” CO 733/278/13 (BNA).
- Wauchope, in his letter to the colonial office, writes: “I think they are right in saying that [with an unsatisfactory response to their demands from the government] . . . the possibility of alleviating the present situation . . . will disappear.” High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 1935, CO 733/278/13 (BNA).
- 50 High Commissioner to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, December 1935, CO 733/278/13 (BNA). Concern over the praising of al-Qassam as a martyr is repeated in CID special report on political situation, December 14, 1935, CO 733/290/7 (BNA).
- 51 “Notes from an Interview Granted by His Excellency.”

Chapter 9: Memorial

- 1 *Al-Difa‘*, December 3, 1935, and January 1, 1936. “Strain and possible dissolution” quotation in FO 371/20018, CID Periodical Appreciation Summary no. 1/36, January 22, 1936 (BNA).
- 2 *Al-Difa‘*, November 27 and December 26, 1935; *al-Kifah*, January 1, 1936. Hananu, as described in chapter 3, was one of the more important rebel leaders during al-Qassam’s time fighting the French. The two have never been connected, though many of their pan-Arab associates would have known each other well.
- 3 *Al-Difa‘*, December 3, 1935.
- 4 *Al-Difa‘*, November 20, 1935. Muhammad al-Qassam’s education is noted in “The Terror” [n. d.] S25/10499 (CZA) and was recounted to me in an interview with Ahmad al-Qassam in Nazlat Shaykh Zayd, Palestine, January 18, 2015. For more information on

- the Rawdat al-Ma'aref school during this period, see "Barnamaj Kulliyat Rawdat al-Ma'aref al-Wataniya, al-Quds al-Sharif: li-sanat 934–935," Eltaher Collection (LOC).
- 5 "Traders and merchants" quotation from *al-Difa'*, December 3, 1935. For donation amounts and "normal incomes" quotation, see *al-Kifah*, January 1 and 2, 1936.
 - 6 All quotations come from various news reports in *Filastin*, December 26, 1935.
 - 7 *Al-Difa'*, January 2 and 6, 1936; FO 371/20018, CID Periodical Appreciation Summary no. 1/36, January 22, 1936 (BNA). Nuwayhid letter in *al-Difa'*, January 6, 1936.
 - 8 Details taken from the following sources: "Nablus Bandits Seen as Izz ed Din's Followers: 'Disciples of Holy Martyr,'" *Palestine Post*, April 16, 1936, 1; "Tafasil hadith 'asaba Nablus—Tulkarem," *al-Difa'*, April 17, 1936, 1; "Despatches on Disturbances in Palestine for the period of 17–31 May, 1936, Part III," WO 32/4177 (BNA); Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion* (Totowa, NJ: F. Cass, 1977), 162. "Go tell the police" quotation detailed in "The Terror" [n. d.] S25/10499 (CZA).
 - 9 *Filastin*, December 11, 1935.
 - 10 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 162–163; WO 32/4177 "Despatch of Disturbances in Palestine" (BNA).
 - 11 Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 162–163.
 - 12 FO 371/20018, CID Periodical Appreciation Summary no. 1/36, January 22, 1936 (BNA); Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement*, 172.
 - 13 FO 371/20018, CID Periodical Appreciation Summary no. 18/35, December 4, 1935 (BNA).
 - 14 A comprehensive description of the hearings is given in *al-Difa'*, March 2, 1936. It serves as the source for both this and the following paragraph.
 - 15 WO 32/4177, "Despatches on Disturbances in Palestine" (BNA).
 - 16 *Al-Jamiyya al-Islamiyya*, October 18, 1936; *al-Difa'*, October 19, 1936. On Manning, see Assaf Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 67. Two days earlier, a group of Haifa's most prominent defense counselors had gathered and pledged to join a group of fellow lawyers in Nazareth already representing the captured Qassamites.
 - 17 *Palestine Post*, October 20, 1936, 1.
 - 18 *Palestine Post*, November 4, 1936. The Mahmud al-Madi quotation comes from *Al-Difa'*, October 29, 1936.
 - 19 Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine*, 67; *Palestine Post*, October 27, 1936, 1.
 - 20 *Palestine Post*, November 4, 1936—italics added.
 - 21 On the hunger strike, see *al-Difa'*, November 30, 1936. On the lengthened sentence for al-Sa'di, see *Filastin*, September 23, 1937.
 - 22 "Hearts of the people . . ." quotation in 'Ajaj Nuwayhid, *Sittun 'Aman ma'a al-Qabila al-'Arabiyya: Mudhakkirat 'Ajaj Nuwayhid* (Beirut: Dar al-Istiqlal, 1993), 188. "Terrorists and undesirable politicians . . ." quotation and arrest figures from "Assassination of Mr. L. Y. Andrews, District Commissioner, Galilee, and Mr. P. R. McEwan, British Constable," October 7, 1937, CO 733/332/10 (BNA).
 - 23 Details from "Terrorism 1936–1937," Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3 (MEC).
 - 24 For the statement of suspects in the Andrews assassination, see "Statement of

- Muhammad Niji Abu Rub,” November 30, 1937, in Tegart Papers, box 1, file 3B (MEC). For al-Sa’di’s arrest, see Jarar, *Al-Shaykh Farhan al-Sa’di, al-Shaykh Furayz Jarrar, al-Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qadir al-Muzaffar* (Amman: Dar al-Diya’, 1988), 31. See also *Palestine Post*, November 23, 26, and 28, 1937.
- 25 The exchange is recounted in Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir, *Mudhakkirat Abu Ibrahim al-Kabir (Khalil Muhammad ‘Issa ‘Ajak): al-Qaid al-Qassamiyya li-l-Thawra* 36–39, ed. Nazih Abu Nidal (Ramallah: Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Filastiniyya, 2010), 20.
- 26 It is not clear how involved the mufti would have been with such minor appointments in a place like Haifa, but one suspects he likely knew of the nomination and supported it. The flip side of this is the appointment of al-Qassam to his positions at al-Istiqlal Mosque. That was an important position in a city like Haifa, but the complicated nature of the mosque’s provenance vis-à-vis the Supreme Muslim Council and the Haifa Islamic Society makes judging the mufti’s role in the appointment difficult. On Amin Nur Allah’s attendance at the 1931 Islamic Congress, see “Isma’ Haddarat A’da’ al-Mu’tamar al-Islami al-‘Am,” 27 Rajab, 1359 [December 8, 1931], Eltaher Collection (LOC).
- 27 This theory is put forward in Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa’i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jam’ia al-Dirasat al-‘Arabiyya, 1985), 70, and “Report from Haifa,” S25/4127 (CZA). Qassamite ‘Arabi Badawi asserts that the mufti had agreed to these requests but, while he failed to start a revolt in central Palestine, he did send the Qassamites money. See Hammuda.
- 28 A number of assassinations have been alleged to have taken place on the orders of the mufti (not to mention countless character assassinations, which in the context of the 1936 Revolt and its aftermath occasionally resulted in murder). This list includes PAWS president Sami Taha, who was shot dead in Haifa in September 1947. See Bayan Nuwayhid Al-Hut, *Al-Qiyadat wa-l-mu’assasat al-siyasiyya fi Filastin, 1917–1948* (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 1981), 527–528; Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine, 1906–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 341–342. An excellent example of the mufti epitomizing divisiveness is the way he dealt with the formation and leadership of the Arab Liberation Army in 1948. See Laila Parsons, *The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914–1948* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2016), 132–135.
- 29 Beyond some superficial parallels such as the rhetoric of jihad and a self-professed Salafi adherence to the shari’a, “the Islamic State” today in Syria and Iraq bears little resemblance to al-Qassam’s ideology. Al-Qassam is reported to have worked closely with Palestinians who held vastly contrary views of faith and society but with whom he shared a drive to end colonial control in Palestine. They include the Communist Najati Sidqi (see chapter 5) and Bishop Grigorios Hajjar, Haifa’s nationalist Melkite bishop who worked closely on ecumenical politics in mandate Palestine. See Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘Aman ma’a al-Qafila al-‘Arabiyya*, 181 (the bishop is misnamed in this account). For a biography of Hajjar, see ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid, *Rijal min Filastin* (Beirut: Manshurat Filastin al-Muhtallah, 1981), 29. For more on Hajjar’s relationship with nationalist politics in the mandate, see Noah Haiduc-Dale, *Arab Christians in British*

Mandate Palestine: Communalism and Nationalism, 1917–1948 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013); Laura Robson, *Colonialism and Christianity in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 35. Cartoon appeared in *Filastin*, July 12, 1936 (see this book's introduction).

- 30 Matthew Kraig Kelly, "Crime in the Mandate: British and Zionist Criminological Discourse and Arab Nationalist Agitation in Palestine, 1936–1939" (PhD diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2013), 47. For reference to village searches, see "Despatches on Disturbances in Palestine for the period of 17–31 May 1936, Part III," WO 32/4177 (BNA). For a comprehensive review of British policies in this regard, see Matthew Hughes, "From Law and Order to Pacification: Britain's Suppression of the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–1939," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39, no. 2 (Winter 2010).

Conclusion

- 1 Moshe Dayan, *Avne derekh: Autobiografiyah* (Jerusalem: Hotsa'at 'Edanim, 1976), 406; Tom Segev, 1967: *Israel, the War, and the Year that Transformed the Middle East* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), 269.
- 2 Dayan, *Avne derekh*, 438; Segev, 1967, 346.
- 3 Musa Budeiri, "The Palestinians: Tension between Nationalist and Religious Identities," in *Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East*, ed. James P. Jankowski and I. Gershoni (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). Budeiri makes a number of factual errors in his biographical sketch of al-Qassam, though his analysis of the ways in which al-Qassam was incorporated into Palestinian nationalist discourse is astute. This period—the "revolutionary" period between 1948 and 1982—remains understudied relative to the mandate and post-Intifada years. One promising resource has been the development of the website The Palestinian Revolution, which has resources about this period for both teachers and researchers. See K. Nabulsi and A. R. Takriti, The Palestinian Revolution, 2016, accessed March 2019, <http://learnpalestine.politics.ox.ac.uk>.
- 4 Ghassan Kanafani, *Thawrat 1936–1939 fi Filastin* (Beirut: Manshurat al-Hadaf, 1988). Haifa-born Leila Khaled, possibly the most famous PFLP member thanks to a widely circulated photograph of her taken after she hijacked a plane in 1969, also thought of al-Qassam in revolutionary-Marxist terms. She wrote in her autobiography that the PFLP began "where al-Qassam left off: his generation started the revolution; my generation intends to finish it." Leila Khaled, *My People Shall Live: An Autobiography of a Revolutionary* (Toronto: NC Press, 1975), 23.
- 5 Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Grove Press, 2010).
- 6 *Filastin*, November 22, 1935, 1.
- 7 Samih Hammuda, *Al-Wa'i wa-l-Thawra: Dirasa fi-l-Hayat wa Jihad Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Jerusalem: Jam'ia al-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya, 1985), 66.
- 8 As an illustration of the problems in tracing identity, take this quotation from al-Qassam's grandson Ahmad about 'Izz al-Din, published in the Israeli newspaper *Yediot Ahronoth*:

His objective was to liberate Palestinian lands from foreign hands. Any Palestinian organization seeking a national symbol for resistance chooses this figure. He has mythical status among Palestinians. He is the father of jihad, a symbol of resistance not just for Palestinians but for all Arabs. I preferred Fatah [the center-left mainstream Palestinian political faction of Yasser Arafat] because of its ideology, but we are all fighting for the same aim. . . . I have a double identity, Syrian and Palestinian, but at the end of the day I'm Arab. As an Arab nationalist following in his grandfather's footsteps, I support the idea of creating one large Arab state. Palestine was once part of Syria, so it's the same thing.

- "Izz al-Din al-Qassam's Grandson: I Support the 2-State Solution," YNet News, November 17, 2010, accessed May 29, 2012, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3985615,00.html>. For an interesting examination of this flux in relation to the former Arab provinces and the Turkish Republic, see Awad Halabi, "Liminal Loyalties: Ottomanism and Palestinian Responses to the Turkish War of Independence, 1919–22," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41, no. 3 (2012).
- 9 On the issue of "oppressive ethnic other to a repressive colonial other": this is what Fredrick Cooper calls "the fallacy of leapfrogging legacies." Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 18. "French and British colonial forces . . ." quotation from Michael Provence, "Ottoman Modernity, Colonialism, and Insurgency in the Interwar Arab East," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 2 (2011): 206. For a detailed list of leaders during the revolt, including some biographical notes, see "Appendix B: Officers of the Revolt" in Yehoshua Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement* (London: Cass, 1974), 388–403.
 - 10 In discussing al-Qassam and Kamil al-Qassab, James Gelvin has argued that they should be considered "local intellectuals" who "assumed the role of ideological mediators, articulating nationalist goals and synthesizing popular nationalist discourse that ostensibly reaffirmed 'traditional values' yet did so within the institutional and discursive framework of a modern national movement." See James L. Gelvin, "Modernity and Its Discontents: On the Durability of Nationalism in the Arab Middle East," *Nations and Nationalism* 5, no. 1 (1999): 80. "It became his home . . ." quotation from Basheer M. Nafi, "Shaykh 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam: A Reformist and a Rebel Leader," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 8, no. 2 (1997): 190.
 - 11 Muhsin Salih, "Al-Qassam wa-l-Tajribat al-Qassamiyya," *Al-Jazeera*, Dec. 12, 2010.
 - 12 Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1982), 31; Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), 18.
 - 13 For more on Nabi Musa, see Eddie (Awad) Halabi, "The Transformation of the Prophet Moses Festival in Jerusalem, 1917–1937: From Local and Islamic to Modern and Nationalist Celebration" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2007). "Take this photograph of me . . ." quotation from Douglas Duff, *Palestine Picture* (London:

Hodder and Stoughton, 1936), 71–72. Duff wrote this passage a few years after the executions. Although Duff was known to be prone to hyperbole and fabrication, this quotation nevertheless gives some insight into the rhetoric around Hijazi's conviction and execution.

- 14 Nuh Ibrahim would go on to pen numerous odes to al-Qassam. Ibrahim, who was killed during the 1936–1939 Revolt, is described in British documents as visiting villages in the area of Tulkarem after al-Qassam's death in order to praise the dead Qassamites and distribute their photographs. See H. P. Rice to Chief Secretary of the Government of Palestine, December 14, 1935, CO 733/297/1 (BNA). For more information on Nuh Ibrahim, see Khalid 'Awad, *Nuh Ibrahim: Sha'ir wa-shahid thawrat 1936* (Nazareth: Matba'at Vinus, 1990); Samih Shabeeb, "Poetry of Rebellion: The Life, Verse, and Death of Nuh Ibrahim during the 1936–1939 Revolt." *Jerusalem Quarterly* 25 (2006). "Honorable" as a descriptor appears frequently in passages from nationalist texts about al-Qassam. See, for instance, Zuhayr al-Mardini, *Alf yawm ma' al-Hajj Amin* (Beirut: Dar al-'Irfan, 1977).
- 15 *Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya*, November 22, 1935.
- 16 UNLU communiqué no. 2, January 1988; communiqué no. 12, April 1988; communiqué no. 28, October 1988, all reprinted in Shaul Mishal and Reuben Aharoni, eds., *Speaking Stones: Communiqués from the Intifada Underground* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 55, 77, 144.
- 17 "Student Elections Highlight Great Palestinian Divide: University Split Over Fatah, Islamic Bloc," *Jerusalem Post*, August 6, 1986, 5.
- 18 "Leaflet No. 31, 27 October 1988" in *Speaking Stones*, ed. Mishal and Aharoni, 247. "The Islamic Resistance Movement . . ." quotation from "Mithaq Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya Filastin—'Hamas,'" in *Al-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya bayna Mithaqayn: Al-Mithaq al-Watani al-Filatini wa-l-Mithaq Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya [Hamas]*, ed. Anas 'Abd al-Rahman (Kuwait: Maktabat Dar al-Bayan, 1989), 98.
- 19 Note that it is difficult to isolate the (re)emergence of al-Qassam as a symbol within Islamist politics in Palestine, though it is logical that as long as there has been an Islamist-nationalist movement, they have used al-Qassam as a symbol. In 1979–1980, when the Palestinian Islamic Jihad organization was first being organized in Gaza, it operated out of 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Mosque in Bayt Lahiya. "Islamization in Conflict," *Jerusalem Post*, January 29 1988, A8, and August 17, 1989, 1. All other quotations from "Palestinian Religious Militants: Why Their Ranks Are Growing," *New York Times*, November 8, 1994, A1.

A peculiar addendum to this is the appearance in 2012 of the "'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Cyber Fighters," an enigmatic and (it seems) briefly lived group dedicated to "cyber warfare" against American and European financial institutions. The group launched massive denial-of-service attacks, crippling the online capabilities of Bank of America, CitiGroup, and JPMorgan Chase. Various theories abound as to whether the "'Izz al-Din al-Qassam Cyber Fighters" were disparate, European-based hackers or in fact an arm of a state military (Iran was the most popular theory). The group claimed to be motivated by YouTube's hosting of an offensive, anti-Muslim video, and

- the group's communications lacked any reference to the issue of the Israel-Palestine conflict. See "Attacks on 6 Banks Frustrate Customers," *New York Times*, September 30, 2012.
- 20 Tamir Sorek, *Palestinian Commemoration in Israel: Calendars, Monuments, and Martyrs* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); survey results are given on 191; the methodology is explained on 12 and 248nn39–40.
- 21 'Awad, *Nuh Ibrahim*, 71; the poem is located on 14–16.
- 22 Shabeeb, "Poetry of Rebellion," 67; 'Awad, *Nuh Ibrahim*, 71. Another book of al-Qassam-related poetry was published in Baghdad in the 1970s. See Muhammad al-Qaysi, *Riyah 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Baghdad: Wizarat al-'Ilam al-Jumhuriyya al-'Iraqiyya, 1974). For more of Nuh Ibrahim's own poetry, see his *Majmu'at Qasa'id Filastin al-Mujahida* in the Eltaher Collection (LOC).
- 23 One children's book, titled *Fi Ahraj Ya'bad*, is a richly illustrated biography of al-Qassam, depicting moments from his time in Palestine, including preaching from a *minbar*, the attack on Nahalal, the discovery of the weapons in Jaffa harbor, and al-Qassam's flag-draped coffin. See Rawdah al-Farkh Hud'hud, *Fi Ahraj Ya'bad* (Amman: Dar Kinda, 1987). Al-Qassam appears regularly in Palestinian school textbooks. Most give a brief biographical summary, with a special emphasis on Ya'bad and what it meant for the Palestinian nationalist movement. One grade 5 textbook lists ten heroes beginning with Khalid Ibn al-Walid, a Muslim general in the first community of believers, through Saladin, 'Umar al-Mukhtar, 'Izz al-Din al-Qassam, Dalal al-Mughrabi (a Fatah fighter killed in 1978), and Yasser Arafat. See *Lughat al-'Arabiyya* (PA grade 5 textbook). For the fictionalized al-Qassam narrative, see 'Asim Jundi, *'Izz al-Din al-Qassam* (Beirut: al-Mu'asasa al-'Arabiyya li-l-Dirasat wa-l-Nashr, 1975).
- 24 FO 371/20018, CID Periodical Appreciation Summary no. 18/35, December 4, 1935 (BNA).

Epilogue

- 1 The description of the events at the Haifa Gas facility and the subsequent massacre at Balad al-Shaykh come from Benny Morris, 1948: *A History of the First Arab-Israeli War* (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 107.
- 2 "'Murderer' and 'Kach'" from "Arab Leader's Grave Desecrated," *Jerusalem Post*, December 5, 1993, 12. Baruch Goldstein, a Brooklyn-born Israeli settler living in Kiryat Arba, near Hebron, was responsible for the massacre that also wounded more than a hundred. See "Seed Planted in Brooklyn Blooms as Violence," *New York Times*, February 27, 1994, A1. For description of the 2014 vandalism, see "A Hate Crime in the North," *Haaretz* [in Hebrew], May 2, 2014.
- 3 Eskin has become a notorious figure in Israel. His 1999 trial was not only for the pig's head desecration of al-Qassam's grave, but also for conspiring to catapult a pig's head stuffed with Quranic passages onto the Temple Mount during Ramadan. This conspiracy was carried out with the help of another man, who was himself a convicted killer of Israel's most famous snake catcher. Eskin had previously become infamous for a 1996 conviction for "incitement to harm" Israeli Prime Minister Shi-

mon Peres by placing a *pulsa d'nura*—a Kabbalistic death-curse—on him. This may have gone unremarked had Eskin not previously claimed success, on live television, for the *pulsa d'nura* he placed on Yitzhak Rabin a month before *that* prime minister was assassinated. Like Baruch Goldstein, Avigdor Eskin was a Kach activist. See “Alleged Co-conspirator Testifies in Pig’s Head Trial,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 24, 1999, 4; “Man Held for Planning to Put Curse on Peres,” *Jerusalem Post*, March 8, 1996, 22; “Eskin Convicted of Incitement,” *Jerusalem Post*, May 29, 1997, 3. On the arson accusations, see “Maqbarat al-Qassam Ahraqa bi-Fi’il Fa’il,” *Ma’an*, December 4, 2010, <http://maannews.net/Content.aspx?id=338646>. On the hole and tunnel, see Shlomi Eldar, “Who Is Desecrating Izz ad-Din al-Qassam’s Haifa Grave?,” *Al-Monitor*, May 20, 2016, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/05/israel-al-qassam-haifa-grave-transfer-vandalism-cemetery.html>.

A Note on Sources

- 1 For more on this argument, see Laila Parsons, “Micro-narrative and Historiography of the Modern Middle East,” *History Compass* 9, no. 1 (2011). There are a few exceptions to this deficit, most notably work done by Salim Tamari. See Salim Tamari, “Jerusalem’s Ottoman Modernity: The Times and Lives of Wasif Jawhariyyeh,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 9 (Summer 2000); “The Short Life of Private Ihsan, Jerusalem 1915,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 30 (Summer 2007). On the targeting of archives, I am referring here to the 1982 seizure of the 25,000 documents in the archives of the Palestine Research Center in Beirut by the Israeli army following their invasion of the city, as well as the looting of the Orient House in Jerusalem during the Second Intifada in August 2001.
- 2 For more on narratives in anti-colonial memoirs, see also Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 34.
- 3 See Muhammad Kamil al-Qassab and Muhammad ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, *Al-Naqd wa-l-Bayan fi Daf‘a Awham Khuziran* (Damascus: Matba‘at al-Taraqqi, 1925).
- 4 For more on the difficulties in writing biographies of Arabs from the period, see Laila Parsons, “Some Thoughts on Biography and Historiography of the Twentieth-Century Arab World,” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 21, no. 2 (2010).
- 5 Extensive personal interviews were also conducted by Abdullah Schleifer and his research assistant Farid Trablusi in the 1960s and 1970s for his 1979 article “The Life and Thought of ‘Izz-Id-Din Al-Qassam.” Sonia Fathi El-Nimr also conducted interviews with Qassamites in the 1970s and 1980s, though her subjects were of lesser centrality to the narrative than Schleifer’s. Most Qassamites have died since these interviews were conducted, and all of the usual caveats apply to both oral history interviews (conducted forty years after the fact) and the use of interviews conducted by someone else. See Sonia Fathi El-Nimr, “The Arab Revolt of 1936–1939 in Palestine: A Study Based on Oral Sources” (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 1975).

GLOSSARY

- ‘ālim* (pl. *‘ulama’*) Islamic religious scholar with advanced training.
- arba‘īn* A commemoration that takes place forty days after someone’s death.
- a‘yān* A social class typically described as “notable.”
- fatwa* (pl. *fatāwā*) A religious decision issued by an *‘ālim*.
- imam* A worship leader at a mosque. An imam typically also holds a position of leadership within the community.
- ‘iṣāba* (pl. *‘iṣābāt*) A small fighting force, often applied to the 1919–1921 Syrian revolts.
- istiqlāl* “Independence.”
- jihad* An Islamic religious prescription translated as “striving.” In this context, it is used to describe a physical struggle against an enemy.
- khaṭīb* (pl. *khuṭabā’*) The prayer leader at a mosque.
- kuttāb* (pl. *katātīb*) An Islamic school for children.
- madhūn* An itinerant marriage registrar employed by an Islamic court.
- madrasa* (pl. *madāris*) An Islamic school, equivalent to the elementary level.
- mazar* A Sufi shrine.
- mīhrāb* An architectural feature in a mosque indicating the direction of prayer.
- minbar* A typically wooden series of stairs to a platform in the mosque, from which the imam or *khaṭīb* delivers his sermon.
- mufti* Typically a position of authority among Islamic scholars within a given territory.
- mujahid* (pl. *mujahidin*) Someone engaged in a jihad, and typically applied to al-Qassam and his associates.
- Naqshbandiyya* A powerful Sufi order in Ottoman Bilad al-Sham.
- qāḍī* A position associated with the shari‘a court, held by an Islamic scholar and typically below that of mufti.
- Qadiriyya* A popular Sufi order.
- shari‘a* Islamic law.
- Tanzimat* A system of Ottoman reforms in the nineteenth century.
- ṭarīqa* (pl. *ṭurūq*) A Sufi order.
- Tijaniyya* A Sufi order popular in West and North Africa.
- umma* The wider community of Muslims.
- wā’iz* An itinerant preacher.
- waqf* (pl. *awqāf*) A religious endowment, typically land, mosques, schools, etc.
- Yishuv* The Jewish community in Palestine.
- zāwiya* (pl. *zawayā*) A Sufi “lodge.”

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<i>Filastin</i>	<i>New York Times</i>
<i>Haaretz</i>	<i>Palestine Bulletin</i>
<i>Al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya</i>	<i>Palestine Post</i>
<i>Al Jami'a al-Islamiyya</i>	<i>Shu'un Filastiniyya</i>
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